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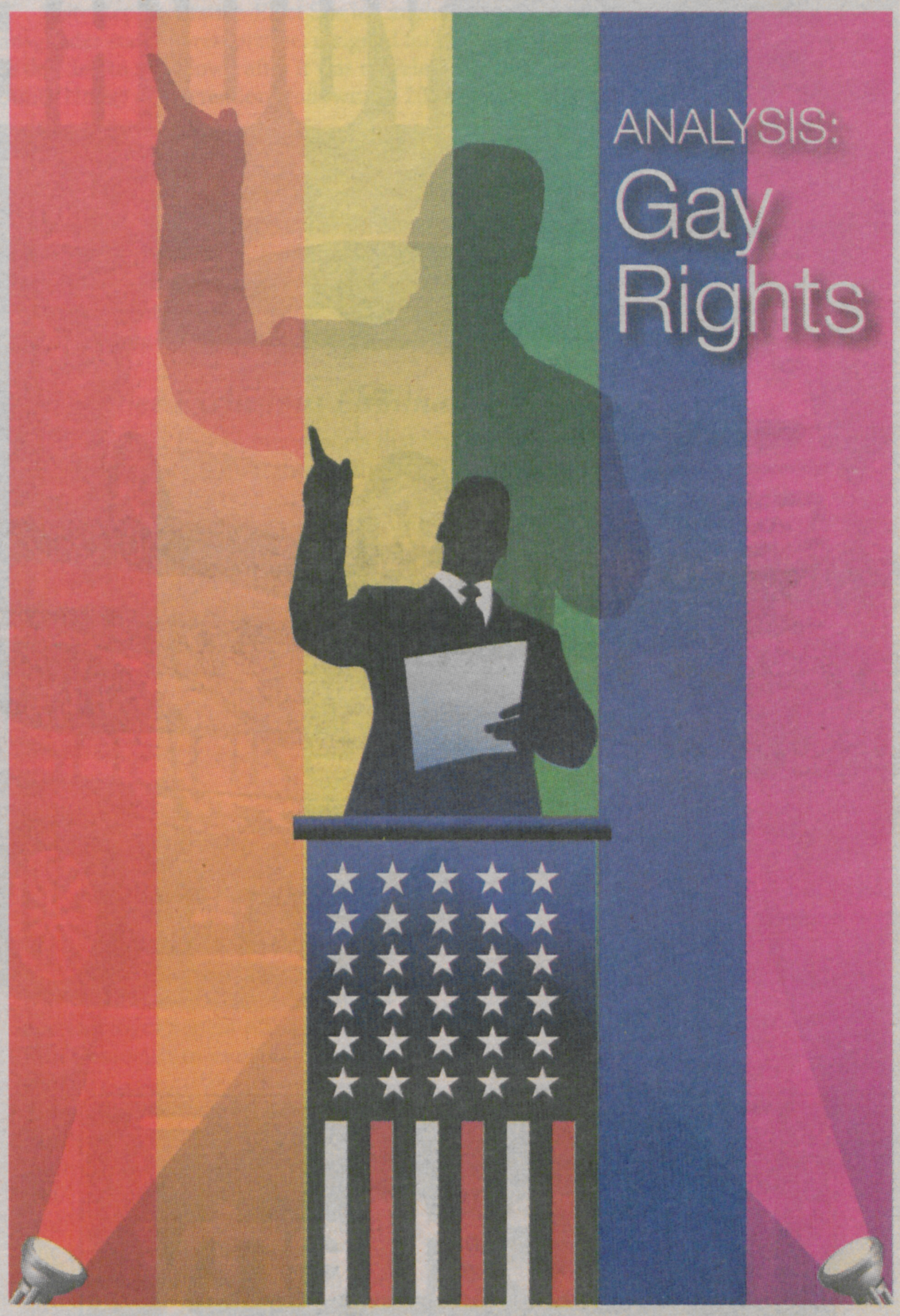
Tipping Point or Lurch Forward?



By Frank Pizzoli

By now the confetti has been recycled. Makeshift election operations have been dismantled. The political opera begins anew and media mavens look for a new fat lady to sing.

With post-election giddiness calmed by the sobering element of time, Central Voice asks: Is the fight for gay civil rights at a tipping point or has it simply lurched measurably forward? Does President Obama's re-election signal a different direction for the nation?

"I see this as pretty much a status quo election," says Dr. Terry Madonna, about the nation as a whole and President Obama's re-election. The nationally recognized polling guru directs the Center for Politics and Public Affairs, Franklin & Marshall College, Lancaster.

In 2008, Obama grabbed 365 Electoral College votes against John McCain's 173. For 2012, Obama pulled 332 to Mitt Romney's 203. "For the president that's pretty much the same results," Madonna notes.

Set against veteran pollster Madonna's observations about the national election, how did Pennsylvania's lgbt candidates running for the state House perform?

One result seems certain. The openly-gay campaigns of lgbt candidates for the Pennsylvania House did not deter voters from selecting them on the ballot. Their performance at the ballot box measures up.

In Pennsylvania, there were four openly-gay state House candidates, all Democrats. Three lost against incumbent Republicans in mostly GOP districts. After defeating a gay-friendly incumbent, one ran unopposed in the "gayest" state House district.

In order to assess whether a constituency is moving forward, backward, or treading water, "you have to compare previous patterns on voting habits," Madonna points out. When voters' habits are compared with previous, non-gay challengers, the gay candidates performed well, even surpassing previous years.

When voters' habits are compared with previous, non-gay challengers, the gay candidates performed well, even surpassing previous years.

Also figuring into the picture is State Rep. Mike Fleck (R-Huntingdon) who publicly acknowledged that he is gay in late 2012. He has never run as an openly-gay candidate since first being elected in 2006 in the 81st District.

In the 104th state House district, openly-gay Chris Dietz, who ran unopposed in the Primary Election, lost the General Election to incumbent Republican State House member Sue Helm. He garnered 13,264 votes to Helm's 15,902.

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State Rep. Mike Fleck

Republican State Rep. Mike Fleck: *I'm Gay*

By Keegan Gibson, PoliticsPA Managing Editor

State Rep. Mike Fleck (R-Huntingdon) publicly acknowledged that he is gay, making him the first openly gay lawmaker in Pennsylvania and the only* currently sitting openly-gay Republican state legislator in the entire country.

In a deeply personal story by the Huntingdon Daily News, Fleck, a devout Christian, explained the difficult road to his announcement.

"Coming out is hard enough, but doing it in the public eye is definitely something I never anticipated," he said. "I'm still the exact same person and I'm still a Republican and, most importantly, I'm still a person of faith trying to live life as a servant of God and the public. The only difference now is that I will also be doing so as honestly as I know how."

He said his party affiliation remains strong.

"The Republican party is all about the government needing to stay out of people's lives," Fleck said. "I'm not a one-issue person and it's not a one-issue party."

More of his testimonial from the Daily News is below.

Fleck, 39, has a resume that would impress Republicans anywhere. An Eagle Scout by age 18, he graduated from Liberty University in 1995 and worked professionally for the Boy Scouts of America as a district executive in Huntingdon County from 1999 to 2004. He was married in 2002.

In the legislature he's been a moderate Republican; he was targeted by the conservative Citizens Alliance for Pennsylvania in 2011. However,

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Political Update

Sen. Casey Recommends Lesbian Appointment

President Obama nominated out lesbian Latina Nitza Quiñones Alejandro as part of a group of three nominees to sit on the U.S. District Court for the Eastern District of Pennsylvania. She was recommended by PA Sen. Bob Casey. If seated she will serve as a federal judge. PA Sen. Pat Toomey, a Tea Party Republican elected to the Senate in 2010, also commended Quiñones for her record. *It's a start Sen. Casey and still lopsided when compared to the level of support you receive from the LGBT community.*

MD Marriage Equality Group Raises $6 Million

The latest report by pro-gay marriage Marylanders for Marriage Equality filed with state election officials last Nov. 27 indicates the group raised $776,041.15 between Oct. 22 and Nov. 20 with an additional $78,802.87 from in-kind contributions. This figure comes on top of the $4,504,262.61 it raised between July 27-Oct. 7 and $547,490.19 in in-kind contributions during the same period. The group raised a total of $5,906,596.82 in cash and in-kind contributions.

Ex-gay Therapy Bill Introduced

Congresswoman Jackie Speier (D-San Francisco/San Mateo) has introduce the "Stop Harming Our Kids" resolution in response to tragic examples of the harmful psychological abuse inflicted on young people through dangerous sexual orientation conversion practices, also known as reparative therapy to convert or "repair" an individual's sexual orientation. *Can't fix what's not broken.*

Ex-gay Therapy Group Sued

In New Jersey, four gay men and two mothers of gay men have filed suit in a New Jersey claiming a Jewish counseling organization committed fraud by "falsely" promising to convert the men from gay to straight through "ex-gay therapry". Southern Poverty Law Center says the lawsuit is a first of its kind case seeking to invoke a state anti-fraud statute to stop an organization and its counselor-therapists from performing the therapy. The lawsuit charges the Jersey City, N.J., based Jews Offering New Alternatives for Healing (JONAH); its founder Arthur Goldberg; and an affiliated counselor who performs conversation therapy on the group's clients, Alan Downing, with violating the New Jersey Consumer Fraud Act.

"Despite the consensus of mainstream professional organizations that conversion therapy doesn't work, this racket continues to scam vulnerable gay men and lesbians out of thousands of dollars and inflicts significant harm on them," says Christine P. Sun, SPLC. The suit argues that virtually all established mental health experts, including leaders of the American Psychiatric Association and the American Psychological Association, have called conversion therapy harmful to the mental health of patients and ineffective in changing someone's sexual orientation. Therapy sessions included nudity, beating mothers in "effigy". *Somebody has Mommy issues.*

Transgender Elected Official Resigns

State Representative-Elect Stacie Laughton, New Hampshire's history-making transgender state representative, resigned following news of her criminal record surfaced. She decided to step down after it was revealed that she had served four months in Belknap County House of Corrections following a 2008 credit card fraud conviction. *Assimilation equals no passes.*

Boeing in Flight against Benefits

The Society of Professional Engineering Employees in Aerospace (SPEEA), a union in contract negotiations with Chicago-based aerospace company Boeing, alleges that Boeing wants to deny equal pension benefits to married same-sex couples in Washington, despite the recent passage of same-sex marriage in the state. Negotiators said they would not be extending the benefits to same-sex couples. SPEEA represents 23,000 employees.

Transgender Exclusions Eliminated

Transgender Law Center reports that San Francisco Health Commission will remove transgender exclusions from the Healthy San Francisco (Healthy SF) health access program. Healthy SF had excluded transgender patients from accessing medically necessary transition-related care that is available to non-transgender patients. Transition-related care has been deemed medically necessary by the American Medical Association and numerous other professional health organizations. The removal of these exclusions follows a growing trend in government, educational institutions, and corporate America toward inclusion of health coverage for the medical needs of transgender people.

Equality PA's Adrian Shanker on AG Transition Team

Equality PA's Adrian E. Shanker has been named a member of Auditor General Eugene DePasquale's transition team. Shanker is well known in lgbt advocate circles for his work with the statewide organization, particularly on relationship recognition in Pennsylvania, having led efforts to win same-sex partner benefits for the Cities of Allentown and Easton and the Bethlehem Area School District, among other efforts.

"We want to be ready on day one to serve the citizens of Pennsylvania, and am thrilled to have the guidance of a strong, diverse, and experienced transition team," said DePasquale.

Transition co-chairs are Joe Powers and Dave Myers. Suzanne Itzko and Liz Wagenseller are serving as co-coordinators of the transition team.

No taxpayer funds are being expended for this transition. Committee chairs and other members include:

- Abe Amoros, former DePasquale campaign chairman
- Chuck Ardo, a West Shore based communications consultant
- Charlie Bacas, a former Cabinet office under Gov. Casey and co-founder of software tool company
- Joan Benso, President and CEO, Pennsylvania Partnerships for Children
- Neal Bisno, President of SEIU Healthcare Pennsylvania and Secretary-Treasurer of the SEIU PA State Council
- Ron Boston, Director of Government Relations, Triad Strategies

Adrian Shanker

- Stuart W. Davidson, attorney at Willig, Williams & Davidson, representing labor unions and employee benefit plans
- Ron Deibert, former deputy auditor general
- Gerald Lawrence, attorney who represents institutions and individuals ranging from Fortune 100 companies to small businesses to individuals and is General Counsel to the Pennsylvania Democratic Party
- John Lori, controller for Vision Resources of Central Pennsylvania
- Cathy Myers, faculty member at Alvernia University
- Tony Ross, President of United Way of Pennsylvania
- Mary Soderberg, former Budget Secretary, currently adjunct faculty at the Fels Institute at the University of Pennsylvania
- David Sweet, attorney and former member of the Pennsylvania House of Representatives
- Jim Wansacz, Chairman of Lackawanna County Commissioners
- Tom Weaver, former Executive Deputy Secretary of the Commonwealth

Victory Fund Taps New Leader

Washington, D.C., political strategist Steve Elmendorf last month was elected chair of the board of directors of the Gay & Lesbian Victory Fund. The Victory Fund has supported local candidates Dan Miller, Chris Dietz, and John Campbell in their bid for elected office.

Steve Elmendorf

Elmendorf, a longtime political insider and connected power-player, is president of the firm Elmendorf/Ryan. Before launching his firm he served as chief of staff to House Majority Leader Dick Gephardt, and as a senior adviser to John Kerry's 2004 presidential campaign and Hillary Clinton's 2008 presidential campaign.

"It's become exceedingly clear how important it is to be in the room when key decisions about LGBT issues are made, so getting more out leaders in those rooms is our priority and our focus," Elmendorf said."

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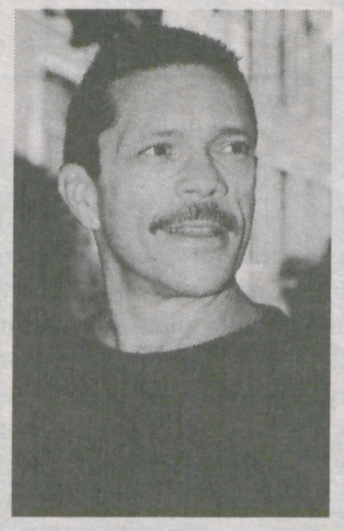
publisher's note

It's About Policy, Not People



Frank Pizzoli

All political discussions should be about policy, not people.

With the recent elections, gay issues and how they may relate to current and future LGBT policies enjoyed extended coverage in the media. Many openly-gay people were elected to office. Apparently, voters decide based on a broad set of considerations, not only, or if at all, on a candidate's sexuality. They voted on policy, not people.

As our community continues to assimilate, the notion of "identity" politics softens its edges. All change sheds new light on old advances. I ask here is the LGBT community, and its ever expanding allied constituencies, and alphabet that now includes Questioning and Intersex, approaching a tipping point in these distinctions we draw on "who's first" or "who's on first" are becoming increasingly irrelevant?

Should distinctions of sexual orientation, gender versus sex, eventually become secondary to the more compelling issues of establishing a more comprehensive view of social policies that embrace, for example, economic justice? How does the gay community decide when to link arms more regularly with progressive causes other than its own civil rights? Why do we ask all other progressive sectors of the political spectrum to join our cause when we, truth be told, rarely offer our resources back in equal weight?

Let's take as an example the recent experiences of Rep. Brian Sims (D-Phila., 182nd District) and Rep. Mike Fleck (R-Huntington, 81st District).

After Sims, a Democrat, was elected to a seat in the PA House from the gayest district in the state, but before he was actually sworn in (making him Rep.-elect at the time), Fleck, a Republican, came out. Admirably, Sims ran as an openly-gay man. Fleck, first elected in 2006 to his House seat, has never run as an openly-gay man, yet he too admirably came out. That cannot be easy for a Republican anywhere, but especially in a state like Pennsylvania. His district voters will decide next electoral round if his being gay matters to them more than his performance, his policies, while in office.

Let's say Sims and Fleck represent the "people". How they represent their constituencies, and by extension, the rest of the state's population in their considered votes and actions, represents their "policies".

Without a doubt Sims is a sleepless advocate for gay civil rights in every possible way. He also has a broader sense of the community and of social justice that reaches beyond the parochial interests of his own community.

Does the same enthusiasm for and broadness of view apply to Fleck? Remember, it's not about people. It's about policy. And we are respectful of Rep. Fleck's personal journey and laud him for his courage.

For example, Planned Parenthood of Pennsylvania notes that Fleck opposes safe and legal abortion. They rate his positions on family planning and reproductive health as "mixed".

Differences in policy between himself and Fleck formed the basis for Sims' Huffington Post article on Fleck's coming out. In the piece Sims "happily invited the news that my colleague in the Pennsylvania House of Representatives, Mike Fleck, came out of the closet".

Sims also noted that while he "may disagree with him on a number of policy issues, if we are ever going to claw our way back out of this awful partisan divide that so many of our politicians have thrust us into, it's going to have to start with finding places of mutual respect and common ground. This is the perfect place to start." We couldn't agree more as that starting place applies to gay civil rights – and to broader social justice issues like women's health issues, the widening income gap, and shredding of social safety nets, school-based sex education, especially as it relates to HIV.

Another example from New York City politics also illustrates the policy versus people idea. Out lesbian and New York City Council president Christine Quinn, a leading candidate to become Gotham City's next mayor, has Alec Baldwin on her case, but not over her sexuality.

"Quinn has blood on her hands…She was the one who singlehandedly killed the voter referendum at (Mayor) Bloomberg's behest and gave him a third term," Baldwin squaks. That's a policy thing, not a personal item. Baldwin isn't arguing about her sexuality. It's about her policy on the issue. One can be gay, supportive of her openness, and still think she subverted democracy.

Quinn is also in the middle of a city sick-pay squabble that illustrates the point. She is refusing for a second time to move forward legislation that would require any business with five or more employees to grant its workers at least five paid sick days every year. That's clearly a labor versus management issue, not an issue of sexuality while in office. If Quinn becomes the city's first openly-gay mayor or the 10th openly-gay leader is irrelevant. Only her position on the issue is important.

Of course gay civil rights remain important. Thirty-two states ban same-sex marriage. There is no overall employment non-discrimination law in Pennsylvania or on a federal level. And having openly-gay elected officials is also important but not sufficient to guarantee progress of our own or others' progressive agendas.

Although bandied about during the past election cycle in ways not intended, voters often heard the claim that no state legislature had ever passed any LGBT-friendly laws without first having one or more openly-gay members elected to the body.

Not exactly so, according to The Gay & Lesbian Victory Fund: "The statement does indeed get bastardized a bit, but our research found that no state had ever passed any LGBT relationship recognition legislation without first electing an LGBT state lawmaker. Relationship recognition refers to domestic partnership benefits, civil unions or marriage equality." Upon further clarification, VF noted their research referred "exclusively to state legislatures." The research does not include "any" lgbt legislation like ENDA-related or hate crimes, or other forms of protections, only relationship-related laws.

Along the lines of "first," or "any," or "some," I'm asking here as we move toward assimilation, are we as a community

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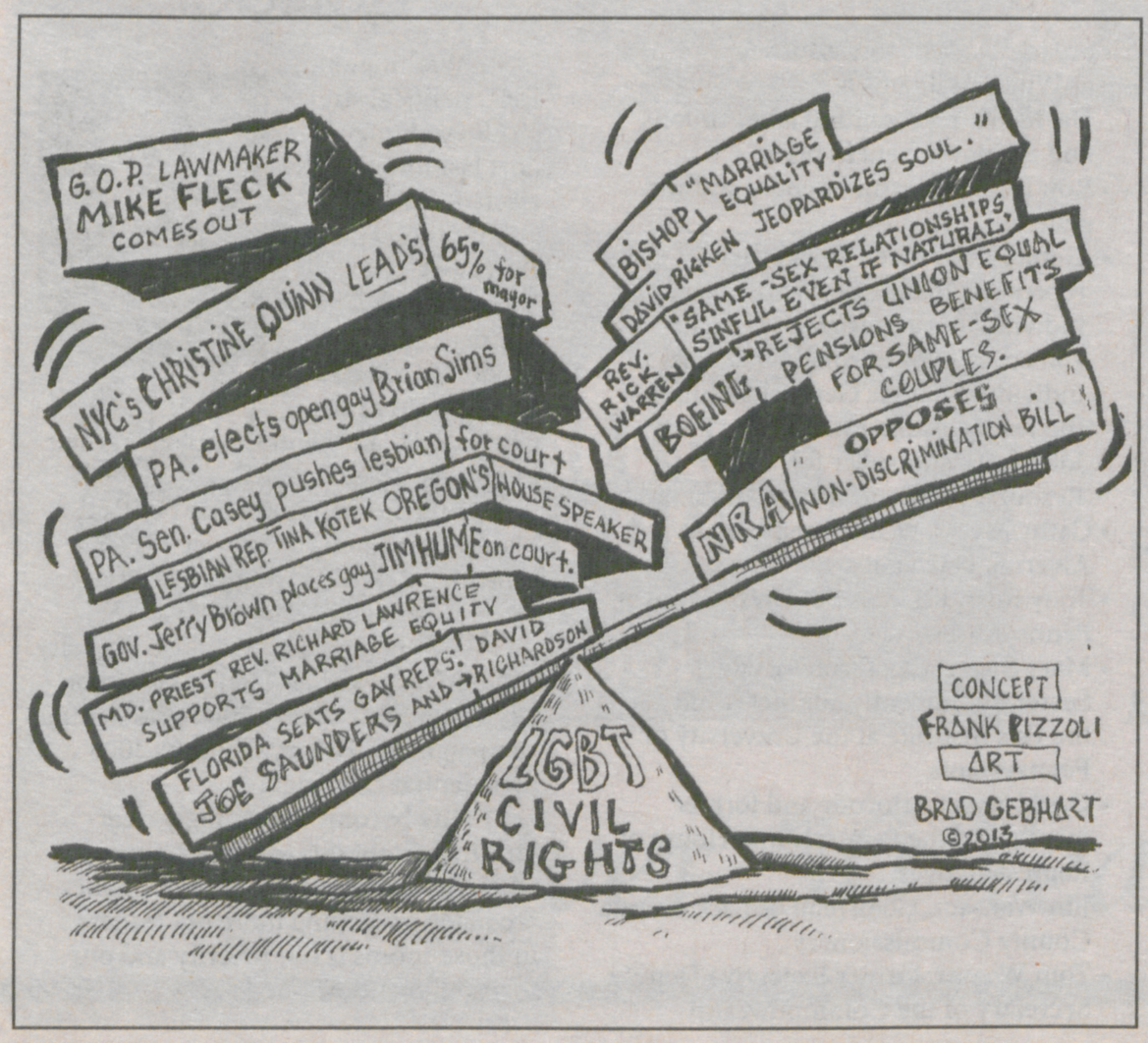
G.O.P. LAWMAKER MIKE FLECK COMES OUT
NYC's CHRISTINE QUINN LEADS
65% for mayor
PA. elects open gay Brian Sims
PA. Sen. Casey pushes lesbian for court
LESBIAN REP TINA KOTEK OREGON'S HOUSE SPEAKER
Gov. Jerry Brown places gay JIM HUME on court.
MD. PRIEST REV. RICHARD LAWRENCE SUPPORTS MARRIAGE EQUITY
FLORIDA SEATS GAY REPS. DAVID JOE SAUNDERS AND RICHARDSON
LGBT CIVIL RIGHTS
BISHOP "MARRIAGE EQUALITY JEOPARDIZES SOUL."
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"SAME-SEX RELATIONSHIPS SINFUL EVEN IF NATURAL."
BOEING REJECTS UNION EQUAL PENSIONS BENEFITS FOR SAME-SEX COUPLES.
NRA OPPOSES NON-DISCRIMINATION BILL
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LGBT Health Care Gap

An estimated 3.4% of Americans identify themselves as LGBT, and many face health risks due largely to social stigma and a lack of understanding about their medical experiences and needs, said a 2011 Institute of Medicine report. In four years of medical school, most students average only five hours of education on the health needs of lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender patients. Overall, medical schools and residency programs are doing an unacceptable job of working to eliminate those disparities through education, said Patricia A. Robertson, MD.

Harrisburg HOPE

Harrisburg Hope believes in the people. With real facts, the citizens of Harrisburg can be depended upon to meet any crisis. The key is community participation in an informed manner.

Alan Kennedy-Shaffer
Central Voice photo

"I am a firm believer in the people. If given the truth, they can be depended upon to meet any national crisis. The great point is to bring them the real facts," intoned Abraham Lincoln. The ability of the 16th president to compromise was displayed on the silver screen last month as Lincoln cajoled Radical Republicans and Southern Democrats into outlawing slavery in 1865. Our city needs similar courage and compromise if we are to help Harrisburg get out of debt.

Harrisburg Hope believes in the people. With real facts, the citizens of Harrisburg can be depended upon to meet any crisis. The key is community participation in an informed manner. In order to level the playing field, Harrisburg Hope has convened more than a dozen community forums to bring our local officials closer to the residents and business owners that they represent. But that is not enough. We should all be versed in the issues that are holding Harrisburg back.

In that vein, here is a citizen's guide to terms key to resolving the $340 million incinerator debt. These terms, such as structural deficit, stranded debt, and bankruptcy, roll easily off the tongues of inside players but may understandably confuse people who are not financial professionals. Part of why Harrisburg accumulated so much debt is that the official watchdogs were making money off of the deals and the community was left in the dark. That must never happen again.

Structural Deficit

A structural deficit occurs when a government consistently spends more than it receives in taxes and other revenues, leaving employees or bills unpaid from year to year. This past year, Harrisburg faced deficits so high that receiver William Lynch warned that the city was in danger of not having enough cash to meet its payroll obligations. Critical vendor bills went unpaid. The city's risk manager and other consultants left town for more financially secure opportunities. Harrisburg's structural deficits pose a long-term threat to fiscal stability, as money from asset sales and money borrowed from other funds cover the city's revenue gap only for a limited time. That is why eliminating the structural deficit is both a top priority and one of the toughest tasks.

Stranded Debt

Stranded debt arises when a household has more bills to pay than money in the bank, or owes more money to creditors than their house is worth. When the mortgage on a house exceeds the value of the home, the mortgage is said to be underwater. This principle also applies to the city, which has already raised taxes. Harrisburg is in danger of having tens of millions of dollars in stranded debt because selling the incinerator will not be enough to pay back the $340 million borrowed debt on the incinerator. If, after selling the incinerator and leasing the city-owned parking garages, the city still owes, say, $20 million, then that $20 million in debt would be "stranded." Without other options, the city might then have to file for bankruptcy protection.

Bankruptcy

City Controller Dan Miller, City Treasurer John Campbell, and a majority of city council members have long been pushing for Harrisburg to file for Chapter 9 municipal bankruptcy protection. But when an individual, business or city petitions for bankruptcy, that process has only just begun. The bankruptcy judge must appoint a trustee to account for the cash and other assets of that individual, business or city, and to propose an equitable distribution of those assets. Recently, Lynch warned incinerator bond insurer Assured Guaranty Municipal Corporation that "you can deal with me, or you can deal with a bankruptcy judge." Basically, federal bankruptcy court is akin to roulette – if Harrisburg is lucky, the judge will force concessions on the creditors.

The Journey Forward

When the state prohibition on Harrisburg filing for Chapter 9 bankruptcy protection expired at the end of November, Mayor Linda Thompson said, "Now, we can hold the creditors' feet to the fire." She vowed, for the first time, to protest any further effort by the bankruptcy prohibition's sponsors, former Sen. Jeffrey Piccola (R-Dauphin) and Rep. Glen Grell (R-Hampden Township), to prevent the city from filing for bankruptcy. Lynch has also embraced the threat of bankruptcy.

"Going through this process, we are going to meet with creditors and negotiate with them and tell them 'you would eat the stranded debt,'" Lynch's spokesperson said. "It's good to have that bankruptcy option there." With city property and income taxes raised last year, city residents and small businesses cannot bear further tax increases. With bankruptcy back on the table, however, creditor concessions seem increasingly likely. Even Lynch knows they are necessary.

Where there is information and public participation there is hope for a balanced solution to Harrisburg's fiscal problems.

The Nation Magazine Honors Don Shaffer

The Nation magazine at its Nation Institute gala Dec. 3 honored Don Shaffer, grandfather of Harrisburg Hope founder Alan Kennedy-Shaffer. From left, honoree Don Shaffer, Kennedy-Shaffer, and Sen. Bernie Sanders (I-VT). The elder Shaffer's work has included battling racial discrimination on Long Island, leadership in the National Emergency Civil Liberties Committee, SANE, the New York Civil Liberties Union, Peace Action, and the Working Families Party. Shaffer. The Nation Institute has also launched the Doris Shaffer Memorial Lecture Series.

Organizations Demand Water Test Data

25 organizations recently sent a letter to Governor Tom Corbett today criticizing the PA Department of Environmental Protection's well water testing and notification policies as outdated, lacking transparency, and inadequate to protect residents and drinking water from pollution caused by gas drilling. The groups called on the Governor to take immediate action to reform PADEP's procedures and disclose all data collected through DEP water tests but only partially reported to households where the testing occurred.

The letter and requests for action were prompted by information revealed through depositions in the case of Kiskadden vs. PADEP and DEP Secretary Michael Krancer's recent announcement of changes to how suspected water pollution from shale gas operations is investigated.

The organizations' letter made three requests:

DEP report all data from households where well water was sampled due to suspected pollution from gas and oil operations. A court deposition of the technical director of DEP's Bureau of Laboratories indicated that DEP routinely omits data on 16 of 24 heavy metals for which it conducts water analyses from the final reports provided to well owners. Some of the omitted metals have serious health impacts and have been found in drilling flowback and produced water. DEP should revise its testing protocol to include all potential contaminants so the agency can accurately evaluate drinking water impacts and affected residents can make informed decisions about their water supplies.

DEP revoke the new policy requiring administrators in Harrisburg to approve any positive notices of water contamination before public notification is made. In response to previously made requests in this regard, Secretary Krancer claimed DEP was fully transparent. In light of the revelations of Kiskadden vs. PADEP, the groups reasoned that the data used by DEP and provided to the public is neither

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your voice

PennFuture Wins on Energy Efficiency Programs

Submitted by PennFuture

Citizens for Pennsylvania's Future (PennFuture) won a major victory for Pennsylvania's families and businesses with a 5 – 0 vote by the Pennsylvania Public Utility Commission (PUC) to deny requests by PECO and FirstEnergy to lower their investments in energy efficiency programs. This decision means Pennsylvanians throughout the state will be able to save energy and reduce their electricity bills by using programs mandated by the PUC.

"This is a resounding victory," said George Jugovic Jr., PennFuture's president and CEO. "PennFuture played a key role getting this law passed but it would have withered on the vine if the two energy giants opposing us – PECO and FirstEnergy – had gotten their way. They wanted to stamp out the new round of energy savings goals set by the Public Utility Commission, but we stood against them to ensure energy savings would be preserved for electric consumers."

The landmark Energy Savings Law has been in effect for three years, creating utility programs available to all electricity customers to eliminate waste, reduce energy use, and give customers lower bills. Pennsylvania customers save approximately $278 million annually, and the state's electric load was reduced by 3,535 gigawatt hours. Based on this success and at the urging of PennFuture, the PUC voted on August 2 of this year to extend the programs thorough May 2016.

PECO and FirstEnergy (representing its companies Med-Ed, Penelec, PennPower, and West Penn) filed petitions before the PUC to reduce their Phase II programs; PECO also attempted to exclude portions of PennFuture's testimony demonstrating the clear benefits of the programs. Both companies were unsuccessful in their demands.

PennFuture worked with the Office of Consumer Advocate, the Sierra Club/ Clean Air Council in defending the Phase II requirements. Other organizations, utilities, and utility user groups also intervened in both the PECO and FirstEnergy matters.

PennFUTURE
Every environmental victory grows the economy.

Organizations continued from page 5

complete nor accurate, and should not be the basis of determining whether pollution has occurred. Notification of contaminated water should be made without delay and bureaucratic red tape eliminated due to the potential harmful health impacts on residents waiting for testing results.

The missing results from all well water tests ordered by the DEP should be provided immediately to well owners. This includes all tests using special reporting codes that omit from reports data that is necessary for accurate determinations by DEP of whether pollution occurred and whether residents' health and water supplies are being harmed. Determinations by DEP based on partial data must be questioned.

The groups concluded that such actions are key to ensuring that the DEP, as a public agency, fulfills its responsibility to serve the public interest and rigorously protects Pennsylvania's residents and the environment. The groups pointed out that current policies fly in the face of DEP's mission to protect the state from gas drilling pollution, increase the risk of residents' exposure to contaminated drinking water, and undermine DEP's credibility in the eyes of the public.

Activist Adrian Shanker and Brandson Pariser Engaged

Pariser, left and Shanker, right

Equality Pennsylvania President, Adrian Shanker, right, and his partner of three and a half years, Brandon Pariser, left, a nurse, are engaged and plan to marry in 2013. The couple is planning to get legally married in a state where it is legal; and have a Jewish wedding ceremony in Pennsylvania. Shanker has been a leader on LGBT relationship recognition in Pennsylvania, having led efforts to win same-sex partner benefits for the Cities of Allentown and Easton and the Bethlehem Area School District, and at the request of Philadelphia Councilwoman Blondell Reynolds Brown, testified to the Philadelphia City Council Committee on Law and Government in favor of the Equal Benefits Bill. Shanker and Pariser live in Bethlehem, PA.

making sense of life

By Dr. Terry Drew Karanen

Integrated Spirituality

Many people equate spirituality with religion. For some persons their religion is their spirituality. This is problematic when the religion is extremely limiting and the adherents are faced with life issues that do not fit into their religious teachings. The healthy desires of prosperity, success, full self-express in career and sexual fulfillment are often cast aside as immoral or less-than-spiritual cravings.

To "gain" spirituality or to become "more spiritual" people often spend hundreds if not thousands of dollars on seminars, courses or programs guaranteed to increase their spirituality. One of the main tenets of my belief system is that we are spiritual beings having a human experience. As such, we can never become more spiritual than we already are.

That time and money spent may seem useless if we already are as spiritual as we can ever be. Though we cannot increase our spirituality through these activities they are not without merit. Why? Because even though they cannot make us "more spiritual" they can allow us a better understanding and greater awareness of inherent spiritual nature.

If we are as spiritual as we will ever be as these spiritual beings having a human experience, then it stands to reason that in some way, big or small, all of our desires are spiritual. That's a huge concept for people used to limiting their expression of life and conveniently compartmentalizing life events.

To be fully self-aware we must integrate our spiritual beliefs into our lives. I recently saw an interview with Dr. Isaac Eliaz, MD, MS, LAc, on the topic of "Understanding Integrated Medicine." Dr. Eliaz speaks passionately about have three basic methods of treating his patients that push the boundaries of the way medicine is widely practiced in the U.S.

I found his beliefs refreshing, since I already work with my medical practitioners in a holistic manner, but I saw quickly how his medical model works for our personal spirituality as well. This is particularly true for people who are in the helping professions, such as counseling, therapy or ministry.

Dr. Eliaz believes all treatment should be patient-driven, non-bias and individualized. Patient-driven medical care means that the practitioner must listen carefully to the person coming to them for help. This conflicts with the American concept of going to the doctor to find out what's wrong with us. As modern medicine is finally admitting, it is the patient, not the doctor, who most often holds the key to the problem. This is just as true for any good counselor. A counselor doesn't give the client advice or answers; s/he works with the client to find their own answers (which is also part of the third basic part).

The second basic part requires the practitioner to open their minds to treatment plans outside their usual protocol, often with modalities with which they have little or no familiarity. I once read a study that indicated surgeries on tribal members in the southwestern U.S. had a much higher success rate if the surgeon encouraged or permitted shamanic rituals with the patient in hospital prior to the operation.

The final part is individualized or personalized medicine and/or treatment. Dr. Eliaz says this is the most dynamic part of the package. People need to feel comfortable with their treatment plan. Part of that comfort level means the patient believes it will work. Thousands of people have been cured of their various cancers through means other than chemotherapy and radiation. But if the patient doesn't believe those complimentary modalities are going to be affective they're better off taking the traditional western approach.

The design outlined by Dr. Eliaz for medical treatment can be applied to our search for our right spiritual practice. If our spiritual practices or beliefs are personally driven (patient-driven) we are willing to look within ourselves for our answers. A non-bias approach to spirituality means that there are concepts in all faiths that could have value for us. This is impossible if we have the "our way is THE way" attitude. For example, just which one of the over 41,000 "Christian" religious denominations around the world are practicing Christianity the right way?

Finally, our approach to spirituality must be individualized with our own background, personality and inner beliefs. This means that our lives and spirituality are not separate, but totally interrelated. To create a life worth living means all areas of our spirituality will be integrated into all areas of our lives. How to do this in areas not usually thought to be spiritual – such as our careers and sex life – will be my topic in the next issue.

Dr. Terry is the spiritual leader of both Center for Spiritual Living Cumberland Valley and Unity of Harrisburg. Info: terry@newthoughtpa.org or www.newthoughtpa.org; and, minister@unityofharrisburg or www.unityofharrisburg.org

Teacher Suspended for Playing Pro-Gay Song

A Detroit-area middle school has suspended a teacher for playing a song about being gay during class. The song, "Same Love", was played during Susuan Johnson's eigth-grade performing arts class at the request of a student. The song's lyrics discuss the harassment faced by gay youth growing up on a daily basis. Johnson was suspending for three days, with pay being withheld for two of those days.

Post Election: Now What for Gay Issues?

By Frank Pizzoli

The Kingdom ain't come yet for the LGBT community but the Promised Land may be in sight. LGBT civil rights now have an arced profile in the nation's politics.

Even with a jutting profile, LGBT attitudes remain all over the place. Some "tipping point" observers say a hardening of views precedes social change.

There were 6,043,599 LGB votes cast, according to Greenberg Quinlan Rosner Research. That's 5% of the electorate. The "T" in transgender isn't reflected in the vote count because reports indicate that transgender voters were not asked as such about self-identification and therefore not counted.

CNN reported that 71% of "gay voters" polled cast votes for Obama and 22% for Mitt Romney. The Community Marketing & Insights poll survey indicated that 90% of LGBT voters voted for Obama. The remaining 10% was divided by 6% for Mitt Romney and 4% were for a third party candidate. 41% of gays and lesbians gave money to the Obama campaign.

At press time, NYC City Council Speaker Christine Quinn enjoyed a 65% approval rating and clear lead among all Democrats thought to be running. She could become the first openly LGBT mayor of arguably the world's most important city.

Meanwhile, Megachurch pastor Rick Warren has said that same sex relationships would still be sinful even if they were natural.

Openly lesbian Rep. Tina Kotek will lead Oregon's legislative chamber as state House speaker. Florida's first out gay legislators, Rep. Joe Saunders and Rep. David Richardson have taken their seats. At press time, State Representative-Elect Stacie Laughton, New Hampshire's history-making transgender state representative, had first resigned and then reconsidered keeping her seat following news of her criminal record surfaced involving four months in Belknap County House of Corrections following a 2008 credit card fraud conviction.

California lawmakers joined 400,000-plus others who are vociferously supporting Ryan Andresen, the 17-year-old gay Boy Scout who was denied his Eagle Scout Award. CA Lt. Gov. Gavin Newsom, a former Webelos Scout, along with 32 other legislators, including U.S. Sens Diane Feinstein and Barbara Boxer, have written blunt letters to the Boy Scouts of America on Ryan's behalf.

Also in California, Gov. Jerry Brown made judicial history today by appointing Jim Humes the first openly gay justice to serve on the California Court of Appeals. He also appointed a well-known lesbian attorney Paula S. Rosenstein to the San Diego County Superior Court.

Around the same time, the Catholic Church's Green Bay, Wisconsin Bishop David Ricken proclaimed that if a voter chose someone for choice and marriage equality their soul will be in jeopardy.

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2012 FAB Honors 2 Individuals, 1 Organization

The 2012 FAB honorees, an awards program of the LGBT Community Center, were two individuals and one organization, a first in the history of the important awards progam.

The honorees are Alanna Berger, Ted Martin, and TransCentralPA.

Alanna Berger

Ted Martin

Alanna Berger has been a highly active proponent of the LGBT community, particularly in Harrisburg, for more than a decade. She was the leader of the Unitarian Church of Harrisburg's Rainbow Advocates Lay-Led Ministry from 2004 – 2009. Berger organized the Marriage Equality Rally on Valentine's Day in Harrisburg from 2006 – 2010. She also served as vice president of the Harrisburg PrideFest Board 2008 – 2009, and was instrumental in their efforts to reorganize the event in 2007/2008.

Berger is a frequent presence at the State Capitol, lobbying on behalf of the LGBT community for marriage equality, anti-discrimination protections, and hate crime legislation, helping to organize rallies and personally discussing her concerns with state legislators. She is a former board member of the Unitarian Universalist Pennsylvania Legislative Advocacy Network and served as coordinator of their LGBT issues efforts.

Berger helped found the Community Responders Network, an organization that coordinates responses to acts of hatred in and around Harrisburg. She is a founder and executive director of Silent Witness Peacekeepers Alliance, where she has helped train and coordinates over 1,000 volunteers to serve as peacekeepers at five local Pride Festivals each summer, as well as at dozens of other events annually. She currently teaches a course on Gender and Sexual Minority Issues at Lebanon Valley College. In 2007, Alanna left her high-paying job to devote herself to this work.

Ted Martin, executive director of Equality PA, has played a pivotal role in the advancement of LGBT civil rights in Pennsylvania during his time with the statewide organization. Under his leadership the organization has been both broad in its scope and dynamic. In rebuilding and reorganizing Pennsylvania's only statewide LGBT advocacy organization, Martin has not only constructed a vital and sustainable organization that is working in all corners of the state, but he's also been able to build relationships, and ultimately new organizations that are changing the landscape for the state's LGBT citizens.

Key among Martin's accomplishments are the formation of the state's first LGBT Equality Caucus in Harrisburg, the advancement of LGBT-inclusive municipal non-discrimination legislation across the state, and the formation of the first statewide LGBT 501(c)(4) political organization and political action committee (PAC). In a state that was the second largest to have never elected an openly LGBT state legislature, Martin has worked tirelessly to form the LGBT Equality Caucus in the final days of 2011; a first of its kind and with members in both the state House and Senate, and from across the Commonwealth.

TransCentralPA - This year, FAB honored an organization for the first time in the history of the award program. TransCentralPA, a non-profit charitable organization that provides advocacy and support for the transgender people of Central Pennsylvania.

First operating in Harrisburg as a chapter of the Renaissance group in 1989, they reorganized as TransCentralPA in 2005. The group has grown to over 50 members, many who previously lived in the proverbial closet. They have a safe place to meet on a monthly basis to discuss the multiple problems and issues that trans people face.

TransCentralPA has also organized the Keystone Conference: A Celebration of Gender Diversity, which brought over 400 transgender people and their allies from all over the US to Harrisburg. The conference is the second largest in the country and brings together educators, psychologists, physicians, surgeons, beauticians and an array of speakers dedicated to improving the lives of transgender people.

The organization's outreach program is an active presence and voice in area schools, colleges, Pride celebrations, and organizations like PFLAG, Planned Parenthood, PCAR and NCADV. Partnering with Equality PA, the National Center for Transgender Equality and the Gay & Lesbian Task Force, they recently helped bring about the revision of Pennsylvania's gender marker policy on driver' licenses and photo IDs.

TransCentralPA strives to help transgender people become a vital part of the fabric of life in their seven county service area, and through their unflagging efforts have finally given full voice, meaning and power to the "T" in LGBT.

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MD Priest Breaks with Church

A Maryland priest has bucked the Vatican and his own archbishop by telling his parishioners that he sees a future in which the Roman Catholic Church could recognize "the total, exclusive and permanent union of gay and lesbian couples as part of the sacrament of matrimony." The Rev. Richard T. Lawrence drew a quick response from the local Catholic hierarchy. Baltimore Archbishop William E. Lori asked that a copy of Rev. Richard T. Lawrence's homily that had been posted online at the church's website be removed because it ran counter to Catholic Church teaching on the subject. Lawrence complied, Lawrence's pastoral associate, Chris McCullough, told BuzzFeed. Lawrence said "even if we do not believe that gay marriage ever could or should be allowed in the church, we could live with a provision that allows civil marriage of gay and lesbian couples."

"Remember that you don't owe anyone an apology. You are who you are, you have no choice, and that is beautiful."

– Emy Storey

Anti-gay Pastor Scott Lively Considers Mass. Governor Run

A pending federal court lawsuit accusing him of crimes against humanity and a certain backlash from civil rights activists isn't enough to deter Pastor Scott Lively from mulling a run for governor.

Lively, a controversial Christian evangelist and founder of Abiding Truth Ministries, grabbed international attention with his anti-homosexual views that he took to Africa and beyond as a missionary, announced that he is considering a bid for the state's top office.

During an interview on Tuesday, Lively said he formed a dozen-member exploratory committee to consider the viability of a campaign for the 2014 election.

"I'm probably 90 percent sure that I'm going to do it, but I'm holding back that 10 percent," Lively said, adding that he is still undecided about whether he would run as an independent candidate, Republican or Democrat. "The third option is probably the least likely."

Lively is the author of "The Pink Swastika: Homosexuality in the Nazi Party" and has taken what he calls his pro-family agenda to other nations - most notably Uganda, which inspired a federal lawsuit earlier this year.

Ugandan gay rights advocacy group Sexual Minorities Uganda is suing Lively for crimes against humanity through persecution in U.S. District Court in Springfield. The lawsuit argues Lively's ministry stirred up anti-gay hysteria in the conservative, violence-riddled African nation by speaking there since 2002 on ways to sway gays "back" to heterosexuality.

It also argues Lively was effective enough to inspire widespread violence against gay rights activists there. He was among a group of U.S. evangelicals who spoke at a 2009 conference against the gay movement.

Pastor Scott Lively, seen here during an interview last year at The Republican, is considering a run for governor of Massachusetts.

Lively and his lawyers have countered that the lawsuit distorts Lively's message and his intent, and that it is Lively's unshakeable First Amendment right to preach his beliefs, at any rate.

A hearing has not yet been scheduled in the case, but lawyers for both sides have filed voluminous arguments.

In terms of his potential political run, Lively said he is "greatly dismayed at the breakdown of family and morality" in Massachusetts.

While declining to name those he recruited for the exploratory committee, Lively said they met in Springfield on Sept. 10. He called the response to his possibly throwing his hat in the governor's race was "very positive" and that he was really testing the waters to see whether the conservative Christian right would back him.

"A lot of people were really happy with the idea," Lively said. "Really the first step is determining whether the conservative activists will get involved. Because if they don't, you really have no base and no chance."

Lively said he is undeterred by the pending federal lawsuit because he believes there is no way the plaintiffs can prevail.

He conceded that his announcement would spark new outrage among gay and civil rights activists, many of whom organized a large rally targeting his State Street coffee shop when the lawsuit was filed in March.

"I've always said I wouldn't run for public office because I wouldn't want to take the abuse. But I've already taken the abuse ... I had a much thinner skin when this all started," he said.

Lively is a Shelburne Falls native from a family of six. In a prepared statement and biography, he said he fell into alcoholism and drug addiction when he was 12.

"(Lively) drifted around the United States as a transient in his late teens and early 20s, sleeping under bridges and begging spare change to survive," the statement reads. "He accepted Jesus Christ as Savior in prayer in 1986 and was instantaneously completely healed."

Lively said his top three platforms would be abortion, fighting the "gay agenda" and education reform.

He said he will decide whether to run by this spring.

Donations Up for 2012

After several years of declining revenue, LGBT social justice organizations experienced a 17% revenue increase from 2010 to 2011 according to a new report by the Movement Advancement Project (MAP). Most of the revenue came from individual donations. Not everyone can be an activist or an advocate. Most people can make a donation, no matter the amount. Donations secured the many historic victories in the 2012 election.

One exception, according to The Washington Blade, may be the National Stonewall Democrats which faces a $30,000 budget gap that needed to be closed by Dec. 31, 2012. "It's no secret that we've struggled with fundraising over the past few years, but today we are at a crossroads and we're turning to you – our members and supporters," wrote Jerame Davis, the group's executive director, in an e-mail sent to his organization. "As the year closes, we're facing a budget deficit of over $30,000 and if we do not bridge this gap, we will likely be forced to close our doors."

Generally, the future looks bright for

continued on page 12

Lancaster events

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Transgender Day of Remembrance

Victims and survivors of sexual violence

Info for individuals who identify as lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and queer or questioning

Nov. 20, about 75 people from around the region gathered on the steps of the State Capital to observe the National Day of Transgender Remembrance. In addition to speakers from the community, 15 volunteers read short descriptions of 15 transgender individuals killed in violent reactions to their sexuality in the last year. Some of them in Philadelphia and Baltimore. "We wanted them to know they are not forgotten," TrancentralPA's Jeanine Rusman told the crowd. Last November, TranscentralPA received a FAB Award from the LGBT Community Center in recognition of their organizational efforts to bring understanding the transgender issues. Secretary of Labor Hilda L. Solis said of the remembrance "I stand proudly today, and every day, as an ally to the transgender community and to every person and family impacted by anti-transgender bullying and violence. Transgender people are part of the diversity that America celebrates today and they, like every American, deserve to live without fear of prejudice or violence."

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Post Election continued from page 7

Translating that vague language, if you vote for President Obama you can go directly to hell.

On the other side of the coin, Maryland priest The Rev. Richard T. Lawrence has bucked the Vatican and his own archbishop by telling his parishioners that he sees a future in which the Roman Catholic Church could recognize "the total, exclusive and permanent union of gay and lesbian couples as part of the sacrament of matrimony."

Related, The Society of Professional Engineering Employees in Aerospace (SPEEA), a union in contract negotiations with Chicago-based aerospace company Boeing, alleges that Boeing wants to deny equal pension benefits to married same-sex couples in Washington, despite the recent passage of same-sex marriage in the state. Negotiators said they would not be extending the benefits to same-sex couples. SPEEA represents 23,000 employees.

Since the election, Obama has nominated an out African-American judge to the Federal Bench, Florida Judge William Thomas. Obama said Thomas represented his "continued commitment to ensure that the judiciary resembles the nation it serves." Thomas would be the first gay black man on the federal judiciary.

Thomas joins Pamela Ki Mai Chen, an out lesbian nominated this summer to serve on the United States District Court for the Eastern District of New York, and Judge Michael McShane, an out judge nominated in September to serve on the U.S. District Court for the District of Oregon, in the line of judicial nominees waiting for Judiciary Committee action on their nomination and the subsequent Senate votes.

In the health care arena, the Transgender Law Center, San Francisco Health Commission, removed transgender exclusions from the Healthy San Francisco (Healthy SF) health access program. Yet an estimated 3.4% of Americans identify themselves as LGBT and many face health risks due largely to social stigma and a lack of understanding about their medical experiences and needs, said a 2011 Institute of Medicine report.

Only time will tell if the apparent LGBT two steps forward will conclude with one step back. Even so ground is gained in the continuing fight for basic civil rights.

What can be accomplished?

- Extend Federal benefits to same-sex military spouses.
- Seat pro-lgbt Supreme Court justices.
- Pass Employment non-discrimination Act
- Continue to overturn Defense of Marriage Act (DOMA)
- Reform LGBT Immigration Policy

Takeaways

1. The sky's the limit for gay candidates seeking political office.
2. Obama's support of marriage equality was a good political move.
3. Support of LGBT issues alone won't save Republicans in moderate districts.
4. The national trend in favor of marriage equality is real.
5. The influence of anti-gay groups is waning.

Chili & Jazz with Blue Elephant Jan. 25

The Ned Smith Center for Nature and Art's next installment of its 2011-2012 Arts and Entertainment Series, Chili & Jazz with Blue Elephant is Jan. 25, 7:30 p.m. The event will take place at the Wooden Nickel Annex at 210 S. Market St. in Millersburg.

Blue Elephant has been charitably as an invitational jam. Participants include some of the best players and songwriters in Central PA including: Dr. Mo, Steve Doman, Chris Purcell, Mitch Ivanoff, Jonathan Ragonese, Kevin Shoaf, Dale Wise, Dave Groninger, John Merx and ... and .... it's a growing list. Core members of the band are Jeff Lynch and Ray Santanna, long time collaborators and renown on the scene for both making music and for making music happen. Jeff, aside from playing both electric and upright bass, is known for presenting and supporting some extraordinary and diverse live music, while Ray sings and plays just about every stringed instrument known ... he is know for his extreme generosity and mentoring of many of the area's best players. One thing is guaranteed at any Blue Elephant gig: it will be a good time.

Tickets for Chili & Blues are $25, and include homemade chili and cornbread dinner, and are available by calling 717-692-3699 or visiting the Center's online box office at www.nedsmithcenter.org.

NRA Misfires

Saint Louis County recently voted 4-3 in favor of the nondiscrimination bill that included sexual orientation. Before the vote, the National Rifle Association urged St. Louis County Council to not pass the measure, mistakenly claiming passage would impact their 2nd Amendment Rights. (**Editor's note:** As in "Is that a gun or are you happy to see me?") Observers sorting out the intentional confusion noted laws on gun restrictions and protections are already on the books and not related to LGBT issues. In effect, the NRA is simply encouraging supporters to vote against protections for LGBT citizens with no actual stake in the outcome. Ready, fire, aim.

Gubernatorial Candidate John Hanger on LGBT Civil Rights

John Hanger, Pennsylvania's secretary of environmental protection under Gov. Ed Rendell, announced his gubernatorial candidacy Nov. 28. He is the first Democrat to announce a challenge to Gov. Tom Corbett, who is expected to seek a second term in 2014. Regarding GBT civil rights, Hanger said: "I support the right of any couple, gay or straight, to get married and equally support the right of any religious institution to marry only those that they wish to marry. I also support the enactment of a state law that prohibits discrimination based on sexual orientation in vital things like employment and housing. Info: http://www.hangerforgovernor.com

Spyless? Shirtless Photo Is Silly Not Scandalous

A newspaper report describes a photograph of a shirtless FBI agent in the case that forced CIA Director David Petraeus to resign abruptly as silly but not scandalous.

The Seattle Times says FBI agent Frederick Humphries sent the photograph to friend and Florida socialite Jill Kelley and others, including one of the paper's own reporters, in an email Sept. 9, 2010.

The subject line read: "Which one is Fred?" The newspaper says it shows "Humphries – bald, muscular and shirtless – standing between a pair of equally buff and bullet-ridden target dummies on a shooting range."

The photograph helped land Humphries in hot water. The FBI is investigating Humphries for talking with Republican lawmakers about the investigation into harassing emails that Kelley received from Petraeus's biographer and mistress.

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Donations continued from page 9

other organizations.

According to the 2012 National LGBT Movement Report, LGBT organizations are projecting combined 2012 expense budgets of $158.4 million, which will represent an 11% increase from 2011, while 2011 expenses increased by 15% from 2010. The report provides a comprehensive and standardized look at the LGBT movement's finances across 40 major LGBT organizations which collectively represent 69% of the budgets of all LGBT social justice organizations.

"Individual donors are increasing their giving to LGBT organizations—and seeing results," said Ineke Mushovic, executive director of MAP. "There is still a lot of work to be done, but the election left no doubt that Americans support equality for LGBT people. The time for change is now, and it's heartening to see more and more donors supporting the organizations who are working tirelessly to make that change a reality." Are you one of those individuals who have made or are increasing your donation to an organization?

The 2012 election brought historic gains with three states—Maine, Maryland and Washington—passing voter-approved ballot measures that extended the freedom to marry for same-sex couples. Minnesota rejected a constitutional amendment banning the freedom to marry, another watershed moment in the LGBT movement. However, 38 states have constitutional amendments or statutes banning marriage for same-sex couples, while federal and most state law still fails to protect a worker from being fired just because they are gay or transgender.

The report also uncovered some other challenges:

The revenue of anti-LGBT opponents still greatly outstrips that of participating LGBT organizations, and the threat that comes from anti-LGBT initiatives funded with these dollars continues to jeopardize the lives of LGBT Americans.

While more individual donors are giving to LGBT organizations, still only 3% of LGBT adults have donated to one of the 40 participating LGBT organizations.

Participating organizations received, on average, almost half (44%) of 2011 revenue from their 10 largest contributors—including individual donors, foundations and/or corporate donors.

Despite these challenges, the overall news is positive:

General financial health remains strong. In 2011, organizations reported nearly six months of available working capital.

Movement groups are highly efficient in their fundraising and programming operations. On average, 80% of total expenses are dedicated to programs and services, exceeding the nonprofit efficiency benchmarks set by American Institute of Philanthropy (AIP) and Better Business Bureau Wise Giving Alliance (BBB).

The staff of participating organizations is diverse, roughly mirroring the broader U.S. population with 34% identifying as people of color, and a lower percentage of senior staff (29%) identifying as people of color. Also, 49% are women and 7% identify as transgender.

Responsive fiscal management and expense reductions over the past few years have protected participating organizations, leaving them in a stronger position to capture and build upon a newly growing revenue base.

"Our recent success has been tremendous," said Masen Davis, executive director of the Transgender Law Center. "The increased support from individual donors will also help us drive forward with other critical work. For example, LGBT youth continue to experience bullying and high suicide rates. Transgender adults face pervasive discrimination in the workplace and in our daily lives. We've proved, however, that strong organizations can and will make a difference."

LGBT community center coalition

By Louie Marven
Executive Director
LGBT Community Center Coalition of Central PA

2012 Banner Year for Community Center

What a year 2012 was at The LGBT Center of Central PA!

We opened up a facility at 1306 N 3rd Street, Harrisburg, which serves as a home for our signature programs Common Roads and CPLAN. Since moving to our new home, we've also started a Women's Group, a Gender Variance Discussion Group, and The LGBT Center Gallery, and provided a home for other community activities and events. Most significantly, our center serves as a visible reminder of our vibrant central Pennsylvania LGBT community.

The LGBT Center Gallery

An especially bright spot in our year was the development of The LGBT Center Gallery, curated by volunteer David Kern. Our center is in the heart of Midtown, Harrisburg, and when we moved in July we knew we needed to use the new facility to display the works of local LGBT artists.

Each month we have featured the work of a local LGBT artist (or the works of a collection of multiple local LGBT artists) in our gallery with receptions taking place during Harrisburg's 3rd in the Burg gallery night (the third Friday of each month).

Since the opening of Kristin Kest's Outlaws and Renegades (A Collection of Fantasies) in June —which was also a chance for the community to preview the unfinished Center—we have welcomed hundreds of visitors through our doors to become familiar with The Center, make new friends, and experience the works of our LGBT creative community.

FAB 2012 Successful

Thanks to everyone who attended FAB 2012 to celebrate our outstanding honorees and help raise vital funds for The LGBT Center.

We had a wonderful evening at Hilton Harrisburg thanks to our sponsors, advertisers, table captains, silent auction donors, photographer Posh Studio, Master of Ceremonies Mike Greenwald, and speaker Jocelyn Kraus. I am especially thankful for the hard work of the FAB committee and those who volunteered the day of the event. Congrats once more to our deserving honorees: Alanna Berger, Ted Martin, and TransCentral PA.

Planning for FAB 2013, scheduled for Saturday, November 9 at Hilton Harrisburg, has already begun. We need your help to make it another success! Join us on January 27 at 4:00 at The LGBT Center for the first community planning meeting. RSVP to fab@centralpalgbtcenter.org if you are able to attend or are interested in hearing more about helping with FAB 2013.

Looking Ahead

Please consider joining our unique and vital work by volunteering, joining a committee, donating, or becoming a member! I look forward to seeing you at The Center in 2013.

The mission of The LGBT Center of Central PA is to create common ground for the LGBT community and allies in central Pennsylvania by providing services through educational, cultural, and community activities that foster wholeness.

National Organization for Marriage Contributions Decline 1/3

The National Organization for Marriage (NOM) saw a steep decline in the amount of money it raised in 2011 – dropping to $6.2 million from the $9.1 million it raised the previous year. Just two donors were responsible for funding 75 percent of the anti-gay group – the organization reported two donations of approximately $2.4 million each. The information is available in NOM's 2011 990, which NOM made available this evening after HRC requested the documents in-person at their Washington, D.C. office earlier this morning.

"The National Organization for Marriage continues to push the notion that there is some sort of grassroots support for their discriminatory anti-gay agenda," said HRC Vice President of Communications Fred Sainz. "Last week, that notion was soundly rejected by voters in Maine, Maryland, Minnesota, and Washington State. Now, NOM's own financial records are serving as the latest proof that support for LGBT equality is common-sense and mainstream. NOM is nothing more than a conduit channeling the anti-gay agenda of a few secretive, wealthy donors."

The sharp drop in funding is notable also because NOM experienced significant financial growth each year since its founding in 2007, when it was formed to demonize LGBT people in California as part of efforts to pass Proposition 8. 2011 marks the first year in which the anti-gay group's funding declined.

In addition to more than $4.7 million of NOM's total $6.2 million reportedly coming from just two mysterious mega-donors, tax documents also reveal some interesting information about NOM's closest affiliates. For example, NOM paid $870,000 to CC Advertising – a group HRC recently filed an FCC complaint against for spamming unsuspecting cell phone users with anti-gay, anti-Obama text messages. The organization also paid nearly $375,000 to Frank Schubert, their ad guru who makes his living largely off of promoting anti-LGBT propaganda.

NOM spent upwards of $5.7 million on attempts to prevent marriage equality in Maine, Maryland, and Washington; write discrimination in Minnesota's constitution; and politicize Iowa's judicial system. Voters in all five states soundly rejected NOM's discriminatory messaging. The anti-gay organization remains embroiled in several legal battles over revealing the identities of the few mega-donors who fund their work.

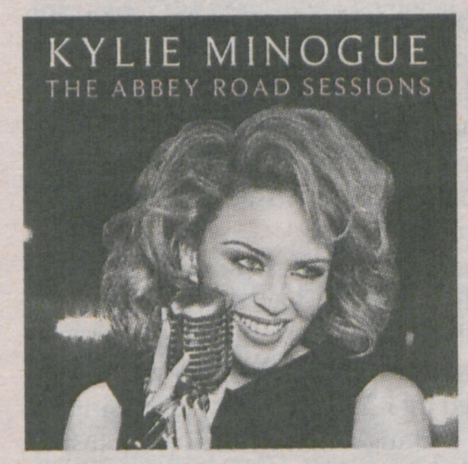
More background on NOM, including information on the organization's leadership and details on its close financial ties to religious institutions such as the Roman Catholic Church, the Knights of Columbus and the Church of Latter Day Saints, is available via HRC's NOM Exposed project at www.nomexposed.org.

Hear Me Out: Kylie Minogue, Tristan Prettyman

By Chris Azzopardi

Kylie Minogue, "The Abbey Road Sessions"

It's practically an unspoken rule that being gay means you have to adore Kylie Minogue. We take her seriously. But non-queers? They only know who she is when the wedding DJ plays "Locomotion." It's a sad fact that Minogue's wholesome dance act – admittedly, I'm a fan – hasn't translated to the American masses outside of a minor hit here and there (her catalog, then, is recycled more than the stuff in your bin). "The Abbey Road Sessions" isn't designed to catapult Kylie to Madonna heights, but it serves as a great gateway to another dimension of an underrated artist who has spent her career in the shimmer of a disco ball. Let's call this one Kylie's "serious album": refined, sophisticated and intimate. She still sounds magical – though her limitations as a capable-but-unremarkable vocalist are clearer in this stripped-down undertaking – on these 16 revamped tracks, including the new "Flower." But notably missing are the thuds and synths. In their place are orchestral sweeps, lounge vibes that sound more piano-bar than nightclub, and even ventures into good ol' big band. "Never Too Late" takes a minimalistic piano approach, sounding nothing like the bubblegum burst of the original, while early '90s single "Finer Feelings," with its rising string section, sounds ready to accompany the most dramatic scene in a big-budget romance. If the gays had their way, it would.



Grade: B+

Tristan Prettyman, "Cedar + Gold"

Breaking up is hard to do, but it works wonders on careers – especially if your name is Adele. The same successes are owed to Tristan Prettyman, whose third album comes after she and Jason Mraz broke off their engagement. Prettyman's reflections on her relationship with the hippie pop star – from first kisses to the end, when he broke her heart – are honest, vulnerable and just plain sad as hell. "Just so you know, I never thought you'd let me go," a line from the devastating "I Was Gonna Marry You," makes it easy to blame Mraz, as the song suggests he left and she had no idea why. It's a painful letting-go, one filled with confusion and hurt and some pretty revealing words directed toward her ex-fiancé, but at least she got an addictive hook out of the deal. The song, with her voice moving so beautifully in swoops over the melody, will easily rank among the best of the year. Prettyman's impressive lyricism is especially captivating on "Say Anything"; in just a couple simple lines, it expresses how love makes you feel on top of the world – and the distress it causes when it all comes crashing down. It's a wrenching contrast. So what does she do? She gets laid. "The Rebound" is a cheeky guitar-chomp about a grocery store hookup. Just because she's not crying herself to sleep doesn't mean you won't.

Grade: A-

Also Out

Green Day, "¡Uno!"

Something happened to the guys of Green Day post-millennium – they started seeing more Broadway shows. How else do you explain their transition from grunge-pop to rock-opera? There's a reason 2004's "American Idiot" became a musical: It was, for better, their most flamboyant album. They reel in the theatrics for their latest, a straight-up rock record that's a nostalgic companion to their 1994 staple "Dookie". It's got edge, hooks and fireball anthems like "Loss of Control" and "Kill the DJ" that speak to all those rebellious teens who hate the world.

Mumford & Sons, "Babel"

Despite the wistfulness of their sophomore album, Mumford & Sons can't be feeling all that bad right now: "Babel" is the biggest debut so far this year, selling 600,000 copies in the first week. Does it live up to the hype? Kind of. The songs muddle together, but even the snobbiest music critic can't deny that "Whispers in the Dark" is a folk-rock marvel. Others, like "I Will Wait," desperately try for "Sigh No More" success. Giving the fiddle a rest on "Ghosts That We Knew," an emotional plea for hope, turns out to be a wise choice. So, not a "total" sham.

Chris Azzopardi is the editor of Q Syndicate, the international LGBT wire service. Reach him via his website at www.chris-azzopardi.com.

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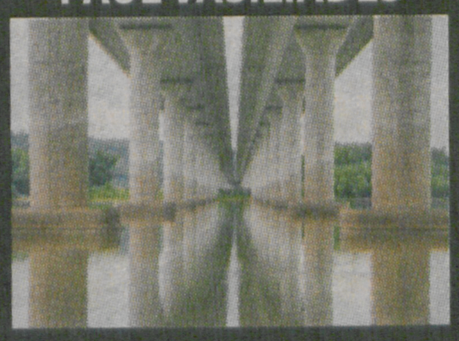

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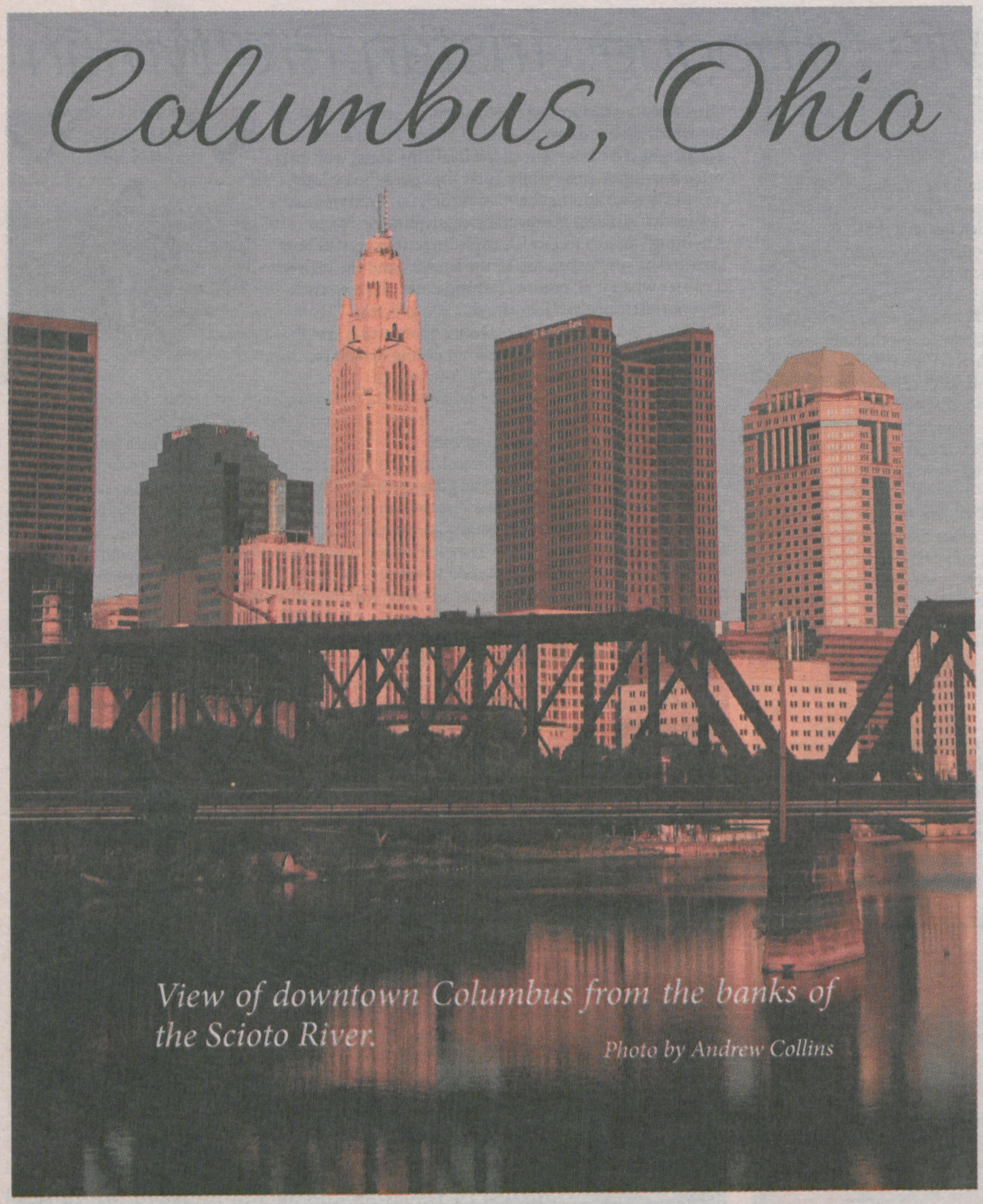

View of downtown Columbus from the banks of the Scioto River.

Photo by Andrew Collins

OUT OF TOWN
by Andrew Collins

As a gay destination, Columbus has increasingly earned cred as one of the coolest and most welcoming cities in the Midwest. Progressive and prosperous, it's home to several outstanding art galleries, a handful hip and historic neighborhoods with visible LGBT populations, and one of the largest institutions of higher learning in the country, Ohio State University. More recently, it's become a hot culinary destination, with a seemingly endless parade of young, creative chefs and restaurateurs - and even some artisan brewers and distillers - generating plenty of buzz.

Columbus (experiencecolumbus.com/glbt.cfm for tourism information) lies within a day's drive of two-thirds of the U.S. population and has a major airport minutes from downtown. The metro region covers a large area, most of it encircled by I-270. But most key points of interest fall within a rectangle that extends from just south of downtown, where you'll find charming German Village, to several miles north of downtown, past the trendy and quite gay Short North neighborhood to the campus of Ohio State University. The most prominent exception is the world-famous Columbus Zoo and Aquarium, about a 20-minute drive north of the city center, and well-worth the detour - it's a pretty incredible place.

Downtown is home to the handsome Ohio Statehouse, which is surrounded by a burgeoning theater district. From Capitol Square, Broad Street leads west to Ohio's Center of Science & Industry, which overlooks the Scioto River, a picturesque waterway fringed by attractively landscaped parks. Head east on Broad to reach the superb Columbus Museum, known for its modern American and German expressionism collections, and beyond that the gentrified neighborhood of Bexley, where you can explore one of the most impressive botanical gardens in the country, the Franklin Park Conservatory.

Extending just beyond downtown's upper edge is the Short North, whose century-old redbrick architecture supports a dynamic arts community, dozens of cool indie shops, a bounty of notable eateries and cafés, and a number of gay-owned businesses. In these parts you'll also find evidence of the city's fervent embrace of artisan beverages, including Middle West Spirits (middlewestspirits.com), a partly gay-owned producer of exceptional whiskey and flavored vodkas, and Brothers Drake Meadery (brothersdrake.com), which turns out distinctive mead wines made from honey.

Continue north of the Short North along High Street, and you'll reach Ohio State University, a virtual city in itself. Tours are available of this immense campus. One must-see is the respected Wexner Center for the Arts, a frequent host of provocative (sometimes GLBT-relevant) exhibits and events.

German Village, just south of downtown, fell into disrepair in the middle of the 20th century. In the face of plans to demolish much of the neighborhood, concerned residents created the largest privately funded historical foundation in the nation and preserved this 233-acre haven of cobbled lanes, wrought-iron fences, flower gardens, redbrick cottages, and stately homes. Providing some greenery, the Huntington Gardens in beautifully landscaped Schiller Park blooms with perennials from spring through fall.

The city's superb restaurant scene has become known among adventurous eaters as one of the best in the Midwest. Right in German Village, there are several great options, such as Barcelona (barcelonacolumbus.com), a snazzy and fun Mediterranean restaurant with a queer-trendy following. Whether for breakfast, an afternoon snack, or dessert, do not miss Pistacia Vera (pistaciavera.com), a gorgeous bakery and coffeehouse serving stunningly colorful yuzu-pink guava, black raspberry, and other French-style macarons, plus delicious quiches and croque monsieurs. Also try Katzinger's Deli (katzingers.com), which has long been renowned for its massive sandwiches and wonderful soups and cheesecakes, and the dapper pizzeria, Harvest (harvestpizzeria.com) - try the delicious pie topped with chevre, sopressata, basil, and cherry tomatoes.

In the Short North, a romantic gay-popular eatery that excels in contemporary and classic French cooking, L'Antibes (lantibes.com) employs a polished yet friendly staff. Loosen your belt to sample rich and exquisitely prepared fare like beef short ribs with black truffle potatoes and shiitake mushroom ragout. Check out campy and fun Betty's (bettyscolumbus.com) for contemporary renditions of traditional comfort food (with Asian and Latin influences) and excellent microbrew beers and fun cocktails. Casual, affordable Tasi (tasicafe.com) doles out fresh and creative breakfast and lunch fare, and airy and light-filled Northstar Cafe (thenorthstarcafe.com) serves food all day, but is especially renowned for breakfast and brunch.

Bodega (columbusbodega.com) is a diverting, lively restaurant specializing in tapas (the garlic fries with spicy tomato aioli are hard to resist). For exceptional coffee, stop by Impero (imperocoffee.com), a first-rate artisan café. A bit farther north in up-and-coming Clintonville, Sage American Bistro (sageamericanbistro.com) serves innovative mod-American cuisine and has a fun happy hour; and Alana's Food & Wine (alanas.com) has become well-regarded for some of the most interesting, globally inspired fare in the city.

Browse the wonderful stalls at North Market (northmarket.com), which is usually swarming with foodies, including plenty of attractive lesbians and gay guys. It's the original home of the beloved ice cream shop, Jeni's (jenis.com), which has developed a roster of truly unusual flavors (consider goat cheese with sour cherries, or sweet corn-black raspberry) and now has several shops around the city.

From here, you can continue south into downtown to find plenty of other intriguing dining options, including gay-favorite Sidebar 122 (sidebar122.com), a romantic and modern spot that fuses Latin American and Mediterranean cuisine; de Novo Bistro (denovobistro.com), an elegant venue that's ideal for dining before or after a show at one of the nearby theaters; and hipster-favored Double Happiness (doublehappinessohio.com), a late-night favorite in the Brewery District known for swish cocktails, fun people-watching, and tantalizingly tasty yakitori.

Columbus has always had plenty of fun gay bars, including a number of friendly

continued on page 15

Out of Town continued from page 14

neighborhood spots, although quite a few establishments have come and gone over the years. In the heart of the Short North, Axis (columbusnightlife.com) is the city's hottest and hippest gay disco, with a nice-size dance floor, an intimate (though often packed) upstairs lounge, and some of the best drag shows around. The same owners run nearby Union Station (columbusnightlife.com), a handsome and festive gay bar and restaurant, caters to a smart-dressed bunch of lesbians and gay men.

Other Short North bar options include the relatively new and tony Level Dining Lounge (levelcolumbus.com), a lively and colorful space known both for eating and drinking, and Exile Columbus (exilebar.com), a dark and steamy place that caters to leather dudes, bears, fetish fans, and guys on the make - rather randy and hot dancers perform here, too. Downtown's Wall Street (wallstreetnightclub.com) is a spacious women's club that's especially appreciated for its theme nights, which feature everything from drag to stand-up comedy. And in the Brewery District, Club Diversity (www.clubdiversity.biz) is a welcoming martini bar, cabaret, and theater with a steady lineup of engaging entertainment.

Among the mellower locals' hangouts, military-inspired AWOL Bar (awolbar.com) has memorable drag shows, friendly Cavan Irish Pub (cavanirishpub.com) serves Guinness and Harp and is a favorite for karaoke on Tuesdays, and Club 20 pulls in mixed LGBT crowd up in Clintonville.

If you're looking for a hip and intimate hotel, try The Lofts (55lofts.com), a sophisticated boutique property that's adjacent to and run by the much larger Crowne Plaza (ichotelsgroup.com). It's on the edge of the Arena District and occupies a historic 1882 warehouse. Rooms have floor-to-ceiling windows, exposed brick, sleek custom-designed beds and furnishings, and bathroom walls decorated with actual New York City subway tiles. Downtown's Westin Columbus (westincolumbus.com) is a National Historic Landmark that's been fully restored to its 19th-century splendor - it's arguably the cushiest lodging option in town.

Rooms are large and comfy at the Hyatt Regency (columbusregency.hyatt.com), and just around the corner, the moderately priced Hampton Inn & Suites (hamptoninn3.hilton.com) sits right in the southern end of the Short North and is also an excellent option. And by the Ohio Statehouse, the stylish and upscale Renaissance Columbus (marriott.com) is a favorite of business travelers.

The gay-owned German Village Guesthouse (gvguesthouse.com) is one of the most elegant accommodations in the city, offering smartly decorated rooms and suites in two historic buildings steps from great restaurants and bars. It's an ideal option if you're seeking the intimacy of a small inn but the privacy and independence of a private apartment.

There are also a few charming B&Bs close to the Short North and popular with gay and lesbian visitors. Occupying a lavishly restored redbrick Victorian house, 50 Lincoln-Short North B&B (columbus-bed-breakfast.com) has seven warmly furnished rooms. Also quite charming, Harrison House B&B (harrisonhouse-columbus.com) is nearby in the historic Victorian Village area. This stunning 1890 Queen Anne mansion contains four high-ceilinged rooms with fine antiques. Either property offers guests an introduction to Columbus's rich history, charming architecture, and warm hospitality, all of which combine to make this one of the country's most inviting gay destinations.

Andrew Collins is the editor in chief of the GLBT travel magazines OutAloha and OutCity, and he covers gay travel for the website GayTravel.About.com.

"Fairytales, Fables and Fantasy" Theme at Art Association of Harrisburg

Themed "Fairytales, Fables and Fantasy" the Art Association of Harrisburg presents a Winter membership exhibition Jan. 11, with a reception from 5 to 8 p.m. hosted by Anne Davis and Ellen Warren. Music for the reception will be provided by the duo "Free the Tweeds." The exhibition runs until Feb. 14.

The theme of the exhibition was chosen to coordinate with the association's Bal Masque benefit, scheduled for Feb. 9 at Appalachian Brewing Company. Tickets are on sale at the Jan. 11 reception at a $5 discount.

Prize juror for the exhibition will be Carrie Breschi, Executive Director of the Carlisle Arts Learning Centre. Prizes for the show have been sponsored by the following: XPEDX – Watercolours; LB Smith Ford – Photography; Alan Hostetler Insurance – Pastels & Drawings; Art Depot – Oils & Acrylics; Integrity Bank – Sculptures & Ceramics; Kate Earley – Other Media; Hilton Harrisburg – Best of Show.

Gallery at 21 North Front Street, Harrisburg, with gallery hours of 9:30 a.m. to 9 p.m. Monday through Thursday, 9:30 a.m. to 4 p.m. Friday, 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. Saturday, and 2 to 5 p.m. Sunday.

Info: 717-236-1432; www.artassocofhbg.com.

arts & entertainment

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How did four blue-collar kids become one of the greatest successes in pop history? Find out at Jersey Boys, the Tony Award-winning Best Musical of 2006 that takes you up the charts, across the country and behind the music of Frankie Valli and The Four Seasons. Discover the secret of a 40-year friendship: four blue-collar kids working their way from the streets of Newark to the heights of stardom. And experience electrifying performances of the golden greats that took these guys all the way to the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame: "Sherry," "Big Girls Don't Cry," "Can't Take My Eyes Off You," "Dawn," "My Eyes Adored You," and more. Not recommended for children under the age of 12 due to strong "profane, authentic Jersey" language.
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WHITAKER CENTER

Market Square Concerts presents Schumann Trio
Jan. 15, 8 p.m.
Sunoco Performance Theater

Tickets are $30, $25 for Seniors, $5 for College Students with ID, and Free admission for school-age students
The Schumann Trio, comprised of Russian pianist Anna Polonsky, violist and founding member of the Guarneri Quartet Michael Tree and clarinetist Anthony McGill from the Metropolitan Opera, who performed alongside Itzhak Perlman and Yo-Yo Ma at President Obama's inauguration, will perform music by Mozart, Schumann, Bruch and Kurtág.
Photo credit: Peter Checchia
Presented by Market Square Concerts
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STRAND CAPITOL THEATRE

Jazz in the City
Studio
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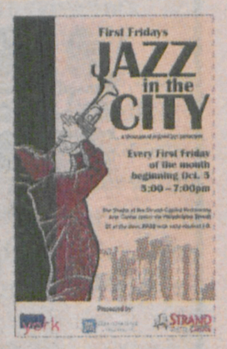

Under the artistic direction of Jeff Stabley, Jazz in the City will welcome regional musicians each month during First Friday festivities from 5:00 pm to 7:00 pm in the Studio at the Strand-Capitol Performing Arts Center.
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Robin Tyler

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Fleck continued from page 1

aside a few votes in committees where Fleck doesn't serve, there haven't been significant votes on gay rights issues during his tenure.

He and his wife separated about a year ago; they do not have children.

He will be joined in January by Brian Sims of Philadelphia. The Democratic attorney is the first openly gay candidate to run and win office in Pa.; he ousted Rep. Babette Josephs (D-Phila) in April.

Ted Martin is executive director of Equality PA, the state's largest lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender advocacy organization. He says Fleck is now the only openly gay Republican legislator in the nation, although another will take office in Ohio in January. Former Missouri Republican Rep. Zach Wyatt is also openly gay.*

"There's an opportunity here to have an open discussion in a new way," Martin said. "There's a real live voice to talk about it inside the Capitol, inside the Republican caucus. I hope Representative Fleck will want to work with us."

"I respect his process, respect that this isn't easy," said Martin, who came out at age 32. "I would hope people respect his integrity and his privacy."

There's no conceivable political upside to the announcement in Fleck's district which is one of the most conservative in the state. Registered Republicans outnumber Democrats nearly 2-1.

Fleck won a four-way primary for the seat of outgoing Rep. Larry Sather in 2006 and was unopposed for re-election this year. The 81st district comprises most of Huntingdon County with parts of Blair and Mifflin. Under the new map expected to be in place for 2014, he will have a slightly more moderate district: all of Huntingdon, a smaller part of Mifflin and a part of Centre County in the suburbs of State College.

Here is more of the Huntingdon Daily News story:

After college, Fleck returned home to southern Huntingdon County, purchased his grandfather's farm and found himself working as district executive for the Boy Scouts of America. He'd been extensively involved in the program in his youth, was once named Scout of the Year and, during his senior year at SHCHS, earned the distinction of Eagle Scout.

As an executive for the organization, Fleck said "now my livelihood depended on hiding my true sexual orientation, something I was very good at."

He continued that during his 20s, he firmly believed what he's been taught, that homosexuality was a choice and so never felt in great conflict because he'd learned to suppress his feelings.

"I wanted to live a 'normal' life and raise a family," Fleck said. "I also believed that by marrying, I was fulfilling God's will and I thought my same-sex attraction would simply go away.

In fall 2000, Fleck met his future wife and they immediately clicked.

"She was everything I could have ever asked for and to this day she is still my best friend," he said.

While his professional dreams were becoming reality, Fleck said he was also weathering personal battles, namely his same-sex attraction which, contrary to all he believed and was taught, remained.

"So I just prayed harder and put it in God's hands," he said, adding that as one of the county's most visible couples, the unresolved feelings and pressure of public scrutiny took its toll and Fleck opted for therapy.

"I sought out treatment from a Christian counselor, but when that didn't work out, I engaged a secular therapist who told me point blank that I was gay and that I was too caught up in being the perfect Christian rather than actually being authentic and honest," Fleck said.

He said the hardest part of the process has been reconciling his faith with his sexuality.

"Through years of counseling, I've met a lot of gay Christians who have tried hard to change their God-given sexual orientation, but at the end of the day, I know of none who've been successful," he said. "They've only succeeded at repressing their identity, only to have it reappear time and time again and always wreaking havoc not only on themselves, but especially on their family."

Fleck said once he was able to be honest with himself, he could finally be honest with others, because no one in his life had any clue about his personal struggle, not even his wife.

"My wife and I became closer than ever before but it was bittersweet as we both concluded that the marriage was over," he said. Fleck moved out in the summer of 2011 and his wife bought a house that fall.

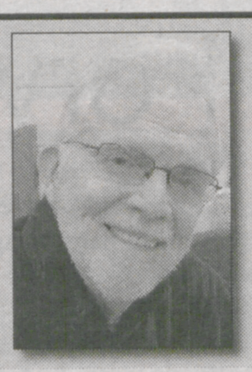
Fleck stressed he is still the same representative the residents of the 81st District elected in 2006 and have since reelected.

"I don't see anything changing in my life, I don't see my voting pattern changing," Fleck said. "I just want to do my very best for the 81st District. I'm just trying to be authentic and I do owe it to my constituency to do that."

Fleck joins http://thinkprogress.org/lgbt/2012/05/04/477877/wyatt-missouri-gay/" Missouri's gay Republican state Representative Rep. Zach Wyatt who last May told MSNBC's Lawrence O'Donnell that he (http://thinkprogress.org/lgbt/2012/05/02/475444/missouri-gay-republican-comes-out-against-dont-say-gay-bill/") come out as gay to his Republican colleagues to urge them to abandon their support for the state's "Don't Say Gay" bill and help young gay people embrace who they are. "I just wanted to make sure if I could get one student to not go home, go home from being bullied and hurt themselves, or worse yet, possibly take their own lives, I think I've done my job as a state representative," Wyatt explained. At the time, he was the only out, gay Republican holding state office in the US.

*The original version of this story reported that Fleck was the first openly gay GOP state lawmaker in the country; that was based on two interviews but is not the case.

Ally in the Academy



By Trum Simmons

New Beginning

There's nothing like looking into the eyes of a three-month-old baby and watching her read your face with great interest. Seeing her return a smile is not bad, either. In fact, just being close to this beautiful little being for an hour or two as she explores her new world is just the best thing ever.

Especially if the baby is your brand new, first-ever granddaughter Anya.

Everyone told me it would be like this, and they spoke the truth. I haven't felt this way since my daughter Liz was born 31 years ago, and now Liz has given me another joyous opportunity for reflection and rumination.

So this column will be about two people in my life—Anya Eveline Simmons and Barack Hussein Obama—and how each represents exciting new beginnings, not just for me but for our whole country.

How do Anya and the president relate to one another? Oh, in so many ways. Just think about this: by the time Anya is old enough to vote—it will be in the election of 2032—a black president of The United States of America will long ago have stopped being a big deal. Hell, perhaps by then we will have had a woman president, and even—hold onto your hat—an openly LGBTQ president.

Now we can't say for sure whom we will choose in the next five national elections, but who was predicting that Barack Hussein Obama would be our president back when I began teaching at HACC in 1971? For that matter, who was predicting such a thing as recently as, let's say, 2004? Oh, African Americans ran for president during the 20th century, but they didn't get very far, did they.

January and February of 2013 are good months to look once again at how extraordinary Obama's 2008 election was, and indeed how extraordinary was his reelection in 2012. We've all heard the numerous analyses of the significance of his first victory and we don't need to repeat them here. But please think for a couple of minutes about how astonishing his reelection in November was.

By so many criteria Obama should have lost that election, no matter whom the Republicans had picked for their candidate. The slowly—oh so slowly—improving economy was of course the one that got the most attention, so let's not deal with that.

Instead, let's talk about race, and let's consider the fact that despite the continuing racism evident in America, despite the fact that all kinds of liberals and progressives were critical of Obama's first term—some even saying openly that he was not being black enough for them—despite all this, he won a second term.

As for me, I remain impressed with how the president has carried his blackness, walking as he has such a fine line, one where he has so often faced those two doors in one of my favorite Gary Larsen cartoons. In that cartoon a man is looking at two doors, one marked Damned if you do, the other, Damned if you don't. The Devil is saying to the poor guy, "Come on, make up your mind!"

Actually, Obama is biracial, as is my granddaughter, so now we're back to Anya. (Perhaps some day she will describe herself as a "mutt," as did the President with that big smile of his.)

I believe that the world in which Anya will grow up is full of possibilities for her and the other children of her generation, possibilities that those of my parents' and my own generation did not have. I believe Anya can live in a world in which more and more people will be accepted and affirmed simply for who they are, no matter what their color or sexual orientation or worldly condition of any kind.

Now I am indeed a romantic idealist, but I have learned a few things along the way, and I also believe the world continues to be a very troubled and scary place. Will my granddaughter face challenges and obstacles along the way? Of course she will.

Will President Obama's second term be full of one success after another? No way!

I do know this. I will do all I can to support my granddaughter as she travels through this complicated world. I will love her and love her, no matter what, which means I will do whatever I can to help her grow and flourish.

For the next few months and years this will include a lot of childcare, and that's fine with me. And while I don't want Anya to watch too much television, I will certainly help her to understand the news she sees and hears.

And every time Barack Hussein Obama comes on TV, I will remind her of something very important. "President Obama was reelected six weeks after you were born, and your mom and our whole family voted for him. That fall was really something!"

Trum Simmons is senior professor of English at Harrisburg Area Community College (HACC) and adviser of The Fourth Estate, the Harrisburg campus student newspaper. He also advises HACC Allies, the LGBTQA student organization.

Privatize Liquor Sales?

By Jay D. Ostrich

Growing up in Pennsylvania, we enjoyed playing games over the holidays and none more than Monopoly. The possibilities were endless, the rules clear and the objective simple – heck, it even had cool Keystone State references. But in the end, there could be only one winner with other players left on the outside, bankrupt and broken.

Such are the ends of all monopolies, private or public – just ask Pennsylvania taxpayers and consumers of wine and spirits who played the game since 1933.

Today, Pennsylvania remains one of only two states in the entire nation (the other Utah) where citizens and consumers are forced to play monopoly with a government that wields ironfisted control over all wholesale and retail sales of both wine and spirits. Whether you are a restaurateur or individual consumer, if you want to play you will pay and obey their rules.

Sadly, the PLCB controls the dice, changes the rules as they go and plays with your money, consumers and teetotalers alike, while picking wine winners and liquor losers for a small crop of producers of their choosing. Customers may never pass go, shop elsewhere or even hang a shingle to compete lest they face the dreaded Chance Card that always reads "Go Directly to Jail."

Sound like a fun game? Pennsylvanians surely don't think so as credible and consistent polling has shown overwhelming majorities of Democrats, Republicans and Independents support ending the game in favor of privatization that will bring personal and economic freedoms while keeping more jobs and higher tax revenues flowing into the community chest.

But in a desperate move to prove their value, PLCB officials have gone one step further to expand their monopoly. In a recent investigative report, the Pittsburgh Tribune-Review uncorked a secretive plot by board officials that siphoned millions in taxpayer money to research, copyright, brand, advertise and market more than 30 "in-house" government wines and spirits to compete directly with private labels for shelf space and consumers. That's right taxpayers, you now own a line of government wine and spirits.

Unfortunately, shoppers can't tell the difference with exotic brand names like TableLeaf, LA MERIKA, Hayes Valley, Las Parcelas and Vinestone filling the shelves – this without so much as a press release from an agency never shy about shining light upon predictable failures like its wine kiosk catastrophe. Pennsylvanians are left to only guess "Government Wine" wouldn't yield much enthusiasm.

But forget for a moment the utterly unexplainable phenomenon of a government agency competing unfairly with private business while using millions more tax dollars to advertise and market these products in secrecy. Forget, too, the violation of public trust that has launched external and internal ethics investigations for numerous violations and disastrous decisions by executive staff that has cost taxpayers millions. In the end, it's about whether the government has any right being in the alcohol sales business when private industry can do it with more convenience, greater selection and better prices.

True, many argue Pennsylvania's public safety is at stake with the PLCB providing a service to protect citizens from the social ills surrounding alcohol abuse. It's a notion quickly dismissed by rigorous academic studies and empirical observation of other privatized states with lower rates of alcohol-related fatalities and maladies. The conclusion: Government-run liquor stores don't prevent alcohol abuse.

Clearly, Pennsylvanians are crying sour grapes with this costly game and are responding by making up rules of their own – openly breaking the law. Even according to a taxpayer-funded study commissioned by the PLCB, bootlegging through neighboring states is prevalent. In Philadelphia and eight bordering counties alone, the study revealed nearly half surveyed broke the law. This border bleed cost Pennsylvania nearly $100 million in sales and $40 million in state taxes.

This was never more evident than in another curious PLCB decision whereby they closed every state store in the aftermath of Hurricane Sandy, even though stores set up just yards over the border re-

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It's About Policy

continued from page 4

pushing the inclusion envelope a bit too far when we make claims like "the first Asian lesbian to be appointed" or "the fifth openly LGBT American appointed" or "one of the highest appointed lgbt Americans"?

Everyone deserves a place at the table but that's not the only part of the story. I am not suggesting the unique backgrounds of individuals be ignored. I am asking that we look at a bigger picture. What does it matter who pushes to expand our freedoms and civil rights? When Lincoln cajoled Congress to end slavery there wasn't a single African American in either branch of Congress. That did not make his moral stance less compelling or successful.

When do we stop trumpeting accomplishments based on sexual orientation and begin to note that some in our herd, as in any group, some succeed, others may not? When we reach the tenth appointment, the twentieth? When an lgbtqi member of every ethnic group on the planet is appointed, elected to, or successful at something? That's a long list. When does that factor become routine or irrelevant?

Our accomplishments are by and large not the result of our sexual orientation. Rather they are reflection of an individual's entire life experiences. Hopefully, no matter our sexual orientation, those experiences making us the people we are move us toward compassionate policies that include the real needs of others, all of whom may not be gay themselves. As we assimilate, let's think broader than our own civil rights to include poverty, women's health issues, the environment.

Tipping Point or Lurch Forward continued from page 1

ANALYSIS:

Gay Rights

Terry Madonna

Dietz's number of votes surpass all recent elections except "the Helm/Stilp matchup in 2010," Dietz says, when Helms won by only 313 votes. He did as well as any other Democratic challenger when running against his incumbent opponent, his openly-gay campaign having no measurable effect on voting habits.

Dietz says he has not made "any firm decisions at this point" about running again.

He remains Millersburg Borough Council president. Regardless of his future plans he says "LGBT equality is definitely progressing here in Pennsylvania."

In the 105th state House district, openly-gay Kelly McEntee ran unopposed in the Primary Election but lost the General Election to incumbent Republican Rep. Ron Marsico. Neither candidate faced a Primary opponent. McEntee pulled 12,073 votes to Marsico's 22,436 or more votes than any of Marsico's challengers since 1988. Her openly-gay campaign had no real effect on voting patterns.

"I feel that 35% of the vote in a conservative district against the Marsico name was a good start from which I will build," McEntee tells Central Voice, who was pleased with her efforts in "earned media." McEntee wants people to know that she "plans to be a candidate" again for the 105th House district seat.

In the 111th state House district, parts of Susquehanna, Wayne and Wyoming counties, openly-gay Democratic candidate Jeff Dahlander, who ran unopposed in the Primary election, was defeated by Republican incumbent Sandra Major, who pulled 16,762 votes to Dahlander's 6,917.

In the 182nd district Brian Sims, who beat a 28-year incumbent in the Primary Election, ran unopposed in the General Election in a Philadelphia area called the "gayest" state House district. Running against fellow Democrat Rep. Babette Josephs in the Primary Election, he had 3,759 votes to her 3,524. In the General Election, he had 26,618 votes or 99.89% cast for him. Sims accomplishment is noteworthy since he is now the state's first openly-gay elected member of the state House of Representatives.

Sims said post-election that while he was "disappointed" Dietz, McEntee, and Dahlander won't be joining him he was certain their campaigns "will have a direct impact" on his work in the House because their campaigns "moved the conversation forward…for the future."

The political stage is set but the actors lines are not yet written. Traditionally, freshman legislators are not given committee assignments, the vital link to getting into the game. Still, shifts in voter's attitudes are measureable.

Rep. Brian Sims

Although each race is different, "there are pathfinders, those on the vanguard" Madonna says referring to Dietz, McEntee, Dahlander, and Sims. "Ideologically, Pennsylvania is somewhere between New Jersey and Ohio, and attitudes do change," he says. With LGBT candidates pulling as many votes as any other challengers in recent elections, one attitude that may be changing is that "gay" matters all that much to voters.

In addition to evolving voter patterns is formation of the state's first LGBT Caucus about one year ago. Essentially, the caucus mission reflects a comprehensive set of civil rights supported by its members in the House and Senate. There's not a single Republican among them, a statement itself.

Chris Dietz

Caucus co-chairs Rep. Dan Frankel, D-Allegheny, and Sen. Daylin Leach, D-Montgomery remain hopeful.

"We know that a solid majority of Pennsylvanians support changing state law to make it more fair and equal on several issues," Rep. Frankel said upon the group's formation. He's referring to a statewide poll of 1,200 registered voters indicating 70% support legislation protecting people who live or work in Pennsylvania from discrimination based on sexual orientation or gender identity or expression.

Co-chair Sen. Daylin Leach, D-Montgomery, has said, "I've been working to legalize marriage equality in Pennsylvania for quite some time, and I am eager to work with my colleagues in the LGBT Equality Caucus and bring those efforts to fruition. We need to end the unjust and hurtful discrimination under current state law that denies same sex couples the benefits we offer married couples."

Kelly McEntee

"The poll results show not only the basic fairness of Pennsylvanians, but their consistency as well," remarked Equality Pennsylvania executive director, Ted Martin.

Martin says Sims' election "will elevate the conversation" and "encourage others to run" which he sees as a "long-term game changer."

Another change is that upon being sworn in this January, every row office candidate - Attorney General, Treasurer and Auditor General - will take their oaths fully supporting LGBT equality "when it comes to non-discrimination, marriage and a whole host of other basic rights," Martin says. Equality Pennsylvania guaranteed that with their endorsement he points out.

Given the recent election results, Central Voice concludes that in Pennsylvania LGBT civil rights are not at a tipping point but progress made is certainly more than a lurch forward. The stage is set and that's the first step in achieving political gains.

We do have our first openly-gay member of the House elected from the state's gayest district following a 28-year incumbent very supportive of lgbt rights. Voting patterns reflect that those who exercise their franchise apparently did not use candidates' sexuality as a litmus test. They voted for the individual and that's both significant and refreshing. It's a notch toward the overall goal of acceptance.

"Incremental, changes in gay issues and attitudes and how these changes are reflected in laws will be incremental," Madonna says.

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Privatize continued from page 17

mained open for business, drawing parking lots full of Pennsylvanians.

At the end of nearly 80 years of control, the PLCB ponderously produced a monopoly of manipulation, mediocrity, malfeasance and mismanagement. In its wake, we've been left with a small cadre of cronies counting their winnings, while the rest of Pennsylvanians, private businesses and consumers lay broken and bankrupted by bootlegging, border bleed and the loss of personal and economic freedoms.

They've had their turn, we've played their unfair game and now Pennsylvanians are demanding their legislators declare this out-of-control agency must never pass go or collect another $200 again.

Jay Ostrich is director of public affairs of the Commonwealth Foundation (www.commonwealthfoundation.org), Pennsylvania's free-market think tank based in Harrisburg.

REVIEWS | BOOKS DVDs CDs

STARS AND DIAMOND RINGS

Stars and Diamond Rings Stars and Diamond Rings have taken taken their friendship to another level with swapped remixes of songs off each others' new records. Having performed together in the past and being part of the tight knit Canadian music scene, the bands have crossed paths many times over the years. After sharing their new records with each other, it seemed like a perfect fit. The tour and remixes were born.

OLLY MURS

Columbia Records is pleased to announce the release of UK popstar Olly Murs' US debut album Right Place, Right Time Dec. 4. The release will include the top 40 hit "Heart Skips A Beat" ft. Chiddy Bang, which has been heating up the airwaves all summer, as well as the upcoming pop anthem "Troublemaker" ft. Flo Rida. Ciara

CIARA

Ciara's won Grammy Awards, BET Awards, and MTV Awards, and she was named Billboard's Woman Of The Year. She's sold more than seven million albums, scored eight Top Ten singles, toured with Jay-Z, Britney Spears, and T.I., and collaborated with artists such as Justin Timberlake, Chris Brown, R. Kelly, Usher and Missy Elliott. At 26, singer/songwriter/actress Ciara's already had an extraordinary musical career, and with the release of "Sorry," the first single from her fifth album, One Woman Army, Ciara's soaring again.

STARS

Stars' have made their highest Billboard chart debut to date with their new album, The North. The album debuted in the top 50 of Billboard's Album Chart at #48 and at #12 on Billboard's Independent Label Chart with 7,239 copies sold. The North, Stars' sixth full-length, was recorded in Montreal's historic RCA Victor Studios and was produced by Stars' Graham Lessard and Marcus Paquin (Arcade Fire).

NELLY FURTADO

Nelly Furtado celebrates release of The Spirit Indestructible by premiering the video for "Parking Lot," the latest single and a fan favorite from the highly-anticipated new album. Inspired by late-night hangouts with friends in her hometown of Victoria, BC, the video features a lot full of custom Mini Coopers, decked-out dancers, and plenty of swagger from the inimitable singer.

Harrisburg Men's Chorus Performs "Easter Bunny Funnies"

Harrisburg Men's Chorus performing at last July's Denver GALA Festival. Enjoy the Harrisburg Men's Chorus "Easter Bunny Funnies: A Springtime Cabaret" Sun., March 10, 4 p.m. and 7 p.m. at the Maennerchor Club of Harrisburg. The spirited group also performs "Life, Liberty and the Pursuit of Laughter" June 7, 8 p.m.; June 8, 8 p.m.; and June 9, 2 p.m. at the Theatre Harrisburg's Krevsky Production Center, in Harrisburg.

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Millennium Music Conference Feb. 14-17

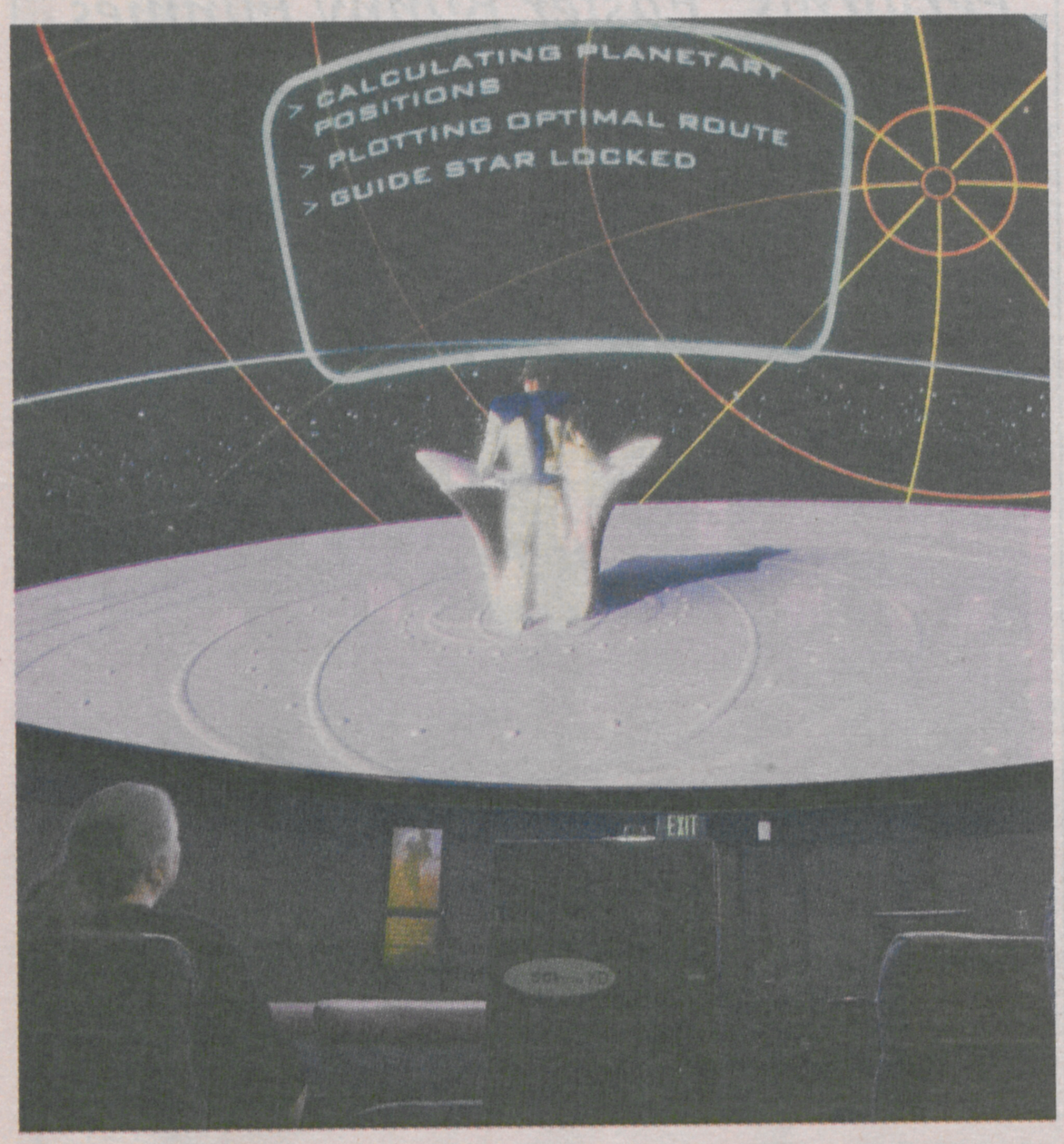
The 17th Annual Millennium Music Conference & Showcase is Feb. 14-17 at the Radisson Hotel & Convention Center, Camp Hill, and 30 showcase venues in and around Harrisburg.

The conference features two afternoons of music business panels, clinics, workshops, networking, day stage, one-on-one mentoring & demo listening sessions, and industry trade show. In the evenings the event celebrates new music with three nights of showcase performances featuring over 300 original acts at 30 live music venues.

Since 1997, this conference & showcase has become one of the premier music events on the East Coast. MMC has educated and showcased thousands of independent acts and artists. Music industry professionals attend as panelists, speakers, mentors, exhibitors and talent scouts to network, do business and share their experience with musicians, registrants and conference attendees.

The community is invited to join in the celebration of new music, emerging talent, independent artists as all showcase performances are open to the public.

New State-of-the-Art Planetarium



The State Museum of Pennsylvania's planetarium has been upgraded and is now one of the most state-of-the-art in the nation. The planetarium's new high-resolution digital projection system is one of only four currently operating in the United States.

The SciDome XD system provides five times the brightness and display capabilities of the planetarium's former projector. It also offers full-dome video presentations and real-time astronomy simulation for educational presentations.

The SciDome XD system is produced by Spitz Incorporated, a planetarium manufacturer and distributor located in Chadds Ford, Delaware County.

"Our new Planetarium XD projector is bigger, brighter and bolder," museum director David Dunn said. "The XD stands for extreme definition and I can attest that it is indeed a spectacular upgrade to a very beloved museum feature."

The State Museum has purchased two new full-dome shows to take advantage of the SciDome XD's high ranging capabilities. "We are Astronomers" (for grade 4 & up) is an exciting look at the global collaboration, technology, and dedication required to answer the unresolved questions of the universe.

"Our returning visitors are astounded at the enhanced clarity and definition of the new system," says Planetarium Director Linda Powell, who is upgrading The State Museum's existing show library to supplement the new offerings. "Many favorite presentations will be back in 2013, brighter and clearer than before."

In addition to the "XD" planetarium experience, visitors will find new interactive kiosks exploring astronomy. "Viewspace" is a direct feed from the Space Telescope Science Institute. It features the latest missions and studies involving a network of telescopes, including the Hubble Space Telescope.

"NASA Space Place," offers up-to-date information on NASA's research and exploration initiatives and The State Museum's popular collection of moon rocks has a new installation.

The State Museum of Pennsylvania, adjacent to the State Capitol in Harrisburg, is one of 25 historic sites and museums administered by the Pennsylvania Historical and Museum Commission as part of the Pennsylvania Trails of History®.

The State Museum offers expansive collections interpreting Pennsylvania's fascinating heritage. With exhibits examining the dawn of geologic time, the Native American experience, the colonial and revolutionary era, a pivotal Civil War battleground, and the commonwealth's vast industrial age, The State Museum demonstrates that Pennsylvania's story is America's story.

Show time schedule: www.statemuseumpa.org.

PPL Now Includes Gender Identity in Policy

Equality Pennsylvania applauds Allentown-based PPL Corporation, a Fortune 300 company, upon their recent announcement that they have changed their non-discrimination policy to include "Gender Identity."

The change occurred following an October conversation between Equality Pennsylvania President, Adrian Shanker, and PPL's Chairman and CEO William Spence. Shanker was delivering a keynote address at a gala celebrating the tenth anniversary of PPL's Gay and Lesbian employee resource group when the two spoke about the importance of the policy change.

"I am elated to hear that PPL has made this important policy change, which makes it very clear that PPL is a company where LGBT people can work without fear of discrimination. Many thanks to Chairman Spence for his commitment to creating an equal workplace!" said Shanker. "This change is very significant, and it is yet another reminder that equal rights for the LGBT community are common sense. I hope our legislators soon catch up with the public as well as those who overwhelmingly believe that non-discrimination in the workplace is good policy."

From a PPL statement issued earlier: "PPL Corporation has once again demonstrated its commitment to equality as it has added gender identity to its Equal Employment Opportunity Policy. In 2002, GLOW became PPL's LGBT business resource group. Domestic partner benefits were offered to PPL's management employees in 2008 and union employees in 2011."

Including "Gender Identity" in a corporate non-discrimination policy clarifies that a company does not discriminate against a person in employment based upon their gender identity. Most victims of gender identity-based discrimination identify as Transgender, however people who do not conform to traditional gender roles, regardless if they are transgender are also at a high risk for discrimination based upon their gender identity. Pennsylvania law does not include sexual orientation or gender identity in employment protections, so companies that do so are protecting their employees further than the law requires.

PPL employs more than 18,000 people nationally and ranks 212 on the Fortune 500.

Community Center Gallery Ranks 2nd in Attendance

In recent calculations, the LGBT Community Center Gallery ranks second in attendance for Harrisburg's 3rd in the Burg evenings held the third Friday of each month. The center's "big room" in the front of the facility doubles as a gallery and meeting space for community groups. Volunteer gallery curator David Kern organizes shows representing a large swath of the region's artistic community, including but not limited to LGBT artists.

"The gallery has been part of 3rd in the Burg since the center opened in June of 2012," Kern said, shown here looking through the frame. The center gallery currently has between "150 and 200 people stop by throughout the course of an evening," he said. Based on numbers counting, "we currently are the second highest attended event during 3rd in the Burg," Kern notes.

The gallery is receives a 30% commission on art works sold which goes back to the LGBT Center programs such as Common Roads.

Info: gallery@centralpalgbtcenter.org

Central Voice Photos

LGBT Center Gallery Curator David Kern

MCC column

By Rev. Lori Rivera, Pastor
MCC of the Spirit

Breathing Room

The decorations have been put away. The tree is back in its box or out by the curb. The walls look bare. The rooms even seem to echo a bit in their emptiness. There's so much room.

Though it seems empty, the beginning of the new year is always like a breath of fresh air for me. Maybe with all the stuff put away from the holidays of December I have more room to breathe and take inventory. My annual practice at the beginning of a new year is to examine my life. Evaluate what worked well last year and reconsider what didn't work well. Those that worked well I usually keep for another year and those that didn't - well, I examine them to see if they didn't work because they really weren't good for me in the first place or if I didn't give them my best effort to work. Sometimes I have to decide to give the ones that didn't work another chance and sometimes I have to change them to fit my life better or get rid of them.

This is also a good time of year to do some cleaning out of ourselves. A new year has started so why not start it off by getting rid of things we don't need or don't want to carry around just as we put away the decorations we no longer need.

In my Christian tradition we are taught through God's word that we can give over our burdens (things) to Jesus. That Jesus will take them upon himself like a yoke on an ox. This might be the worry we carry around as if we could change anything by worrying except give ourselves a few more forehead wrinkles. Maybe the burden is financial. This might be the time to take some positive steps by getting help from a financial advisor.

Sometimes what needs to be cleaned out of our human body homes are the emotions we carry that hinder us from moving forward. Sometimes it's anger at someone or old hurts - - maybe it's time to forgive and forget. Or maybe it's emotional wounds - these might take a professional to help deal with them. And lastly it might be physical needs - maybe it's time for the physical that's been put off for 2 or more years.

Besides cleaning out, the beginning of the year is a time of trying new things. It's like we have a clean slate of time before us for a year. This might be the year to fill it up with new activities or to start a new tradition. A new activity one might want to start this year is attending a worship service. MCC of the Spirit has a worship service on Sunday at 10am and a new worship/Bible study service on Wednesday evenings at 7pm.

So, clean out the unneeded old and try out the new. May your winter season be warm and safe. God bless. Rev. Lori Rivera

thinking out loud

By Abby Dees

Celebrities: *Coming Out So You Don't Have To!*

What Sam Champion's gay wedding and has to do with LGBT rights and 'curing' homosexuality

This morning I awoke to the earth-shaking news that Sam Champion of "Good Morning America" fame was getting married to his longtime boyfriend, and yes, they look great together. I can hardly keep count of all the folks coming out nowadays and I must admit that it's making me nostalgic for the days when there were, maybe, two out LGBT celebrities besides Oscar Wilde and Gertrude Stein – ever. Can you imagine Time magazine putting anyone on its cover today just for coming out? (Except maybe a presidential candidate, which would be really cool, but the subject of another column.)

For simple record-keeping purposes, I think we can now say that all handsome blond news guys are gay, all female talk-show hosts and former world-class athletes are lesbians, and all up-and-coming hot actresses are bi. There, that makes things tidier.

This is how it should be, I know. The whole point of the "come out come out wherever you are" thing was to make being gay kind of ordinary so that at some point we don't ever have to "come out," but rather just be. Which was what I tried to explain in the comments section of a Facebook post about the wedding this morning. You see, the good news is that most of the comments said things like, "Congratulations!" or "Damn, I had such a crush on you and now my hopes are dashed."

However, a large number of those comments also said things like, "Gross," or "I knew he was a fag," or the slightly more critically sophisticated, "This is news " why??"" I can't help illuminate anything for the grossed-out cretins, but I did decide to answer, at ridiculous length, the ones who felt that Sam should keep his marriage to himself. I think I wrote, like, comment number 6427, and so it was read by no one except the person right after me, who said only, "nah."

I should never take anything on Facebook personally; I've learned that the hard way lately, but I'm really tired of having to explain why coming out matters. And I do get that people struggle with apparent inconsistency in the idea that we need to make a big deal about being gay so that one day we won't have to make a big deal about it. In these times when arguments have to fit into 140 characters before your opponent drifts off to play Fruit Ninja, I think I need to find another approach than nuanced multi-layered reasoning.

Which brings me to California's new ban on "Reparative Therapy" for LGBT kids. Homosexuality has been officially "not "a mental illness since 1973, according to the American Psychiatric Association. Curing homosexuality has been up there on the list of pointless and likely dangerous medical ideas that people have tried, right next to arsenic tea and skull drilling ("trepanning" for you word wonks), for almost 40 years. You wouldn't think we'd need a law to prevent such things, but because people like the National Association for Research and Therapy on Homosexuality (NARTH) and Liberace hair-clone, Marcus Bachmann, are still practicing the 21st Century version of applying leeches to release unwanted evil spirits from the body, I guess we do. (You may contact NARTH – I recommend repeatedly and with many pointed questions – at info@narth.com if you would like further explanation).

So, when the NARTHs of the world are out there convincing parents that their kids need to be cured through total quackery, it's good to know that those same parents might also tune into "Good Morning America" and see a happy, likeable gay man living his life fully and appropriately, just like his straight counterparts. Perhaps they will think twice about trying to fix their kids when there is nothing wrong with them to begin with. This is why Sam Champion's wedding announcement matters.

Still too convoluted? How about this tweet-sized argument instead: When straight celebrities announce their weddings, no one ever says "Please stop shoving it in our faces." I mean, didn't we also see Katie Couric's bowel exam on TV? #CongratulationsSamChampion.

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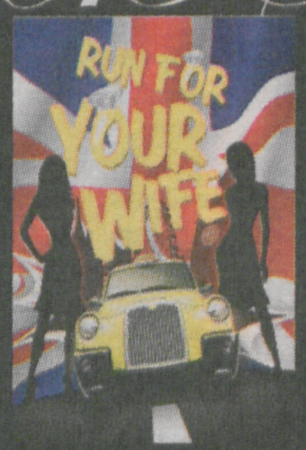
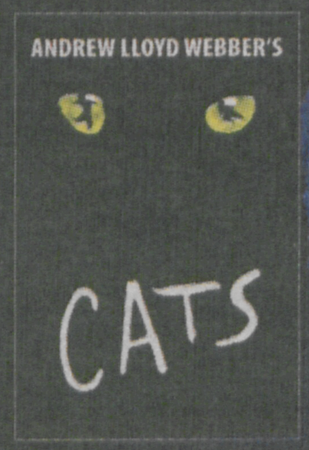


FEBRUARY 14 - MARCH 23

MARCH 28 - MAY 11



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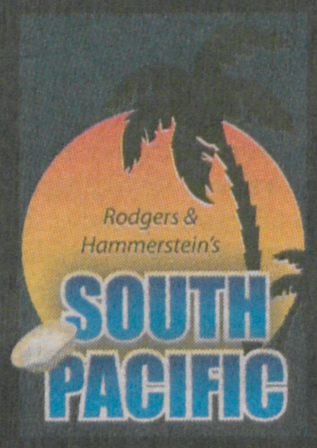
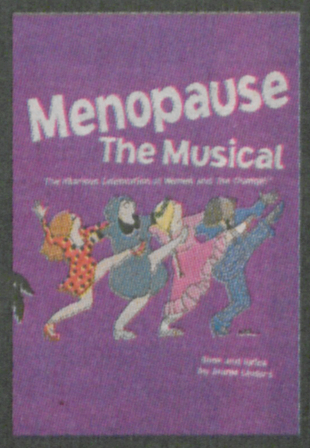
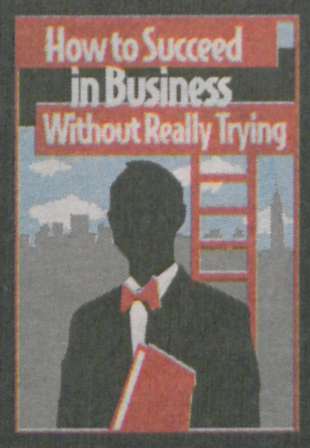


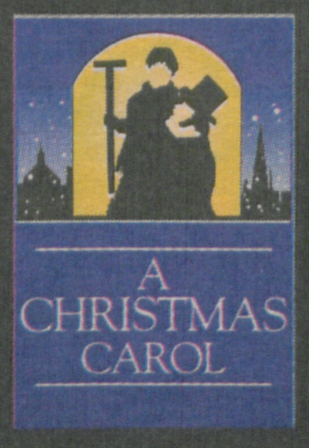
JULY 5 - AUGUST 17



AUGUST 22 - SEPTEMBER 28



OCTOBER 3 - NOVEMBER 9



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Creep of the Week: Peter LaBarbera

By D'Anne Witkowski

After such a scathing rebuke at the ballot box of anti-gay measures and arguments, have people like LaBarbera learned something important? Yes. According to LaBarbera, they aren't being anti-gay enough.

Remember that old saying about trying the same thing over and over and expecting different results being the definition of insanity? Well, if that saying is true, then I've got a live one for you.

Peter LaBarbera of Americans For Truth About Homosexuality, a group that (surprise!) tells lies about gay people, issued an official declaration of insanity on Nov. 8, just two days after LGBT equality won big at the polls.

As you might recall, marriage equality won across the board on November 6 in Washington, Maine, Maryland, and Minnesota. Not to mention the fact that President Barack Obama was reelected. Not only was he the first president to openly support equal rights for lesbians and gays, he's the first president to be reelected after public stating his support for lesbians and gays.

After such a scathing rebuke at the ballot box of anti-gay measures and arguments, have people like LaBarbera learned something important? Yes. According to LaBarbera, they aren't being anti-gay enough.

LaBarbera writes, "We need to stop conceding the moral high ground in a fearful bid to appear 'tolerant': one pro-family group, Protect Marriage Maine, asserted that 'same-sex couples are entitled to respect' – a claim at odds with historic Scriptural teaching."

Got that? LaBarbera is saying that marriage equality won in that state because "pro-family" folks are just too damn nice to the gays. None of this namby-pamby call for "respect" bullshit. Bring out the pitchforks!

LaBarbera continues, "Sadly, there is a 'passion gap' or maybe a 'boldness gap' between LGBT activists and their overly defensive pro-family opponents. Many timid, guilt-ridden Christians make rotten Culture Warriors, while unapologetic 'gays' excel at it."

Ah, yes. Those poor, timid Christians too afraid to stand up to Big Gay. It's truly heartbreaking. Then again, maybe gays are "unapologetic" in the fight for equality because they don't have anything to apologize for. And maybe some of these "timid" Christians are beginning to realize that the War on Gays is not a worthwhile crusade. Maybe, just maybe, there are some Christians out there who are saying to themselves, "You know, maybe fighting against consenting adults who love each other and want to be recognized as a family isn't the best use of my time here on earth. Maybe I should be helping to feed the poor and other stuff Jesus was into."

Of course, LaBarbera would probably respond to such an idea with, "Stop that crazy talk!"

He writes, "Pro-family advocates must stop looking for short cuts and return to their principled duty of educating citizens – especially brainwashed youth — on why homosexual behavior is wrong, unnatural, unhealthy and – most important – changeable."

In other words, "We need to double down on the stuff that isn't working." Especially the ex-gay bullshit that no one with even a shred of professional credibility supports.

The thing is, "returning" to the "principled duty of educating citizens" that gays are a disgusting mistake that nobody likes is returning to the helm of a sinking ship. The word is out: just about everyone knows someone who is gay now. Gays and lesbians aren't creatures lurking in shame in the shadows. LaBarbera and his ilk can't dehumanize an entire group of people who have proven over and over again their very humanity.

"While politics does not decide moral and spiritual Truth, it is an indicator of the heart of our nation," LaBarbera writes.

And it looks like that heart is finally in the right place.

Merck Pulls Boy Scout Funding

Merck & Company, one of the largest pharmaceutical companies in the world and a corporate donor of the Boy Scouts of America (BSA), has announced that the company will cease future funding to the Boy Scouts until gay youth and leaders are welcome within the organization.

Merck's decision comes after Scouts for Equality founder Zach Wahls, an Eagle Scout himself, successfully petitioned Intel and UPS, two large corporate donors of the Boy Scouts, to discontinue funding organizations that discriminate. More than 60,000 people have joined Wahls' newest campaign on Change.org urging Verizon Communications Inc. to stop funding the Boy Scouts of America until the organization removes its ban on gay youth and leaders.

"I am thrilled that Merck & Company - a Fortune 100 pharmaceutical giant - has announced its foundation arm is immediately withdrawing funding from the Boy Scouts of America until the program ends its anti-gay membership policy," said Eagle Scout and Scouts for Equality founder Zach Wahls. "Now it's Verizon's turn to join the growing list of political and corporate leaders urging the Boy Scouts of America to end this policy before more young people are harmed."

Merck & Company spokesperson Kelley Dougherty issued the following statement, confirming that the Boy Scouts will no longer be allowed to receive grants from The Merck Company Foundation as long as the anti-gay policy remains intact.

"Merck Foundation has suspended all funding to the Boys Scouts of America (BSA). The Merck Foundation will consider funding the BSA again when the organization's inclusion criteria has been expanded.

The BSA's policy of exclusion based on sexual orientation directly conflicts with the Merck Foundation's giving guidelines. The Foundation re-evaluated funding for the BSA when the organization restated its policy that excludes members on the basis of sexual orientation. Merck Foundation has notified the BSA of this decision.

As part of the broader review of funding decisions in 2013, the Foundation is currently assessing all current and future funding commitments to ensure that it is not funding organizations with policies contrary to its own."

In June of this year, Merck & Company chairman and CEO Kenneth C. Frazier, who participated in Scouting in his youth, received the "Good Scout" Award by Philadelphia's Cradle of Liberty Boy Scout Council. The Merck Company Foundation had donated $10,000 to Cradle of Liberty Council in March of 2012 and had given $30,000 to Boy Scout entities in 2011, according to the contributions listed on the foundation's website.

Merck joins Intel and UPS, two large corporate donors of the Boy Scouts, in refusing to fund organizations that discriminate -- including the Boy Scouts. Intel and UPS made their announcements following successful Change.org campaigns launched by Eagle Scout Zach Wahls. Other corporations, including Pfizer, are listed as sponsors of the Boy Scouts of America, but have yet to address their corporate giving to the BSA. GLAAD and Scouts for Equality are continuing to reach out to these companies to urge them to stand against the BSA's policy barring gay youth and leaders.

"Those of us here at Scouts for Equality have not made the decision to petition corporate sponsors lightly. It pains us to see the BSA losing corporate support, but we remain convinced that the short term harm of reduced funding is a much smaller price to pay than the long term harm of maintaining the policy," added Wahls.

Wahls, an Eagle Scout and son of two gay moms whose speech in support of marriage equality was YouTube's most watched political video in 2011, launched Scouts for Equality after delivering nearly 300,000 Change.org petition signatures to the Boy Scouts of America on behalf of Jennifer Tyrrell, a lesbian mom and den leader from Ohio who was removed from her 7-year-old's Cub Scout Pack for being gay. Together, Wahls and Tyrrell -- in conjunction with California Scout Ryan Andresen and Kentucky Scoutmaster Greg Bourke -- have led Change.org petition campaigns attracting more than one million signatures in support of ending the Boy Scouts' ban on gay Scouts and leaders.

GLAAD, which broke the story of gay mom Jennifer Tyrrell's removal from her son's Cub Scout pack in Ohio months ago, joined Wahls and Scouts for Equality in celebrating Merck's decision to cease all future funding from the Boy Scouts while their anti-gay policy remains intact.

"These companies are helping to bring change to the Boy Scouts of America by speaking out against the discriminatory policy and in support of the young people who are harmed by it," said GLAAD President Herndon Graddick. "The Boy Scouts of America should take the health of their organization into account and focus on making scouting open to all, rather than working to keep an outdated and unpopular ban in place."

FBI Crimes Stats: 20% of Bias Crime Involves Sexual Orientation

A Federal Bureau of Investigation report says more than a fifth of all bias-motivated incidents in 2011 were motivated by victims' sexual orientation.

Drawn from the FBI's Uniform Crime Reporting Program, data says 20.8% of 6,216 bias incidents reported to the agency last year were motivated by sexual orientation, compared to 46.9% motivated by race. In 2010, the same report indicated 19.3% of reported incidents were prompted by anti-gay bias, compared to 47.3 % by race, and 20% by religion.

"The 2011 FBI hate crimes data is a sad reminder that even as we make great strides towards equality under the law, LGBT people [continue to] face dangers in America," Human Rights Campaign President Chad Griffin said. "We must rid our country of the violence that has devastated our community for far too long."

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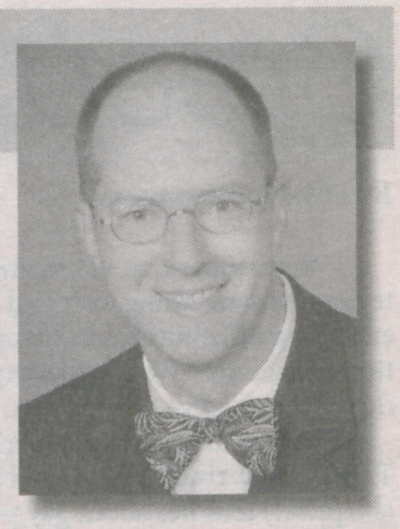
legal column

By Leo L. Dunn, Attorney at Law



New Year's Estate Planning Reminder

It's the start of another year and we are wondering if this will be the year the U.S. Supreme Court declares gays should have equal rights to marriage. This is a good time to get your legal and retirement planning in place, regardless of whether you are 20 or 60! By ready for the change!

Priority one: a living will/health care directive. This protects your decision making now, while you are still alive, in the event you have a medical emergency. It ensures that the person you want making decisions on your behalf is in control and cannot be 'shunted' aside by your next of kin. Remember, even though next of kin may be very supportive today, tomorrow may be different. It can also assure that your partner and friends have access to you if you are hospitalized. A good health care directive should have a section providing for disposition of remains and provisions regarding psychiatric care and who determines visitation access.

Priority two: a durable power of attorney. This also protects you now, while you are still alive. It ensures that the person you trust to handle your finances and day-to-day matters is responsible for them and empowered to perform tasks for you in the event you have an accident, or simply need to be away for an extended period due to your employment. It should always include a provision requesting the court to select your agent as guardian in the event you need one appointed.

Priority three: a last will and testament. This protects your intended beneficiaries after you die. It ensures that your assets go to the person(s) or organization(s) you want to enrich after you die. More importantly, in the case of an unmarried couple (and remember Pennsylvania law does not currently recognize your New York or D.C. marriage), it makes sure that a house owned in one person's name but paid for by both goes to the other partner after death of the first. It also assures that said partner's family can't talk you into going for a walk on the beach after the funeral and having all the locks changed as you are strolling along in grief. This actually happened in Florida a few years ago.

Priority four: a HIPAA waiver. Closely associated with priority one, a living will, this allows the person you designate (usually your health care agent) to have access to your medical records if needed in order to make medical decisions for you. This power is implied in your living will/health care directive, but this document expressly provides the power.

Priority five: health care and insurance. Make sure you are covered by a good health insurance plan, an adequate life insurance policy, and if you are over 45, long term care insurance. Then make sure you are up to date on your health checkups, especially cancer screenings.

Priority six: pension and savings. Review what your expected retirement income would be if you were to retire at 65 and your income stayed the same as it is now. Given your projected pension, 401(k), savings, and social security incomes will you be able to afford your current lifestyle. If not, start changing saving and spending habits now. Do not count on a higher income. If your income goes up later, recalculate then. Right now you should focus on planning for being able to enjoy your retirement.

Plus: To truly protect yourself and your loved ones, you may need additional documents: a cohabitation agreement if you have been together less than two years; a guardianship document if you have children, a trust if you have substantial resources or special needs; a new deed if property is not titled according to contribution; and a business transferal contract or business succession plan if you own a business. If you and your partner are planning on buying a new home together, you should consider placing it in trust so that it is not owned by either party, and thus unreachable by next of kin and outside of Medicare consideration.

Leo Dunn is an attorney and counselor-at-law practicing in Harrisburg area with a focus on the estate planning needs of the GLBT community. He may be reached at leo@leodunnlaw.com or 717-503-1207.

Newt Gingrich Says GOP Must "Keep Pace" on Marriage

Central Pennsylvania's own Newt Gingrich has shifted his position on marriage for same-sex couples. The former US House Speaker now urges Republicans to heed public opinion and move toward acceptance of the freedom to marry.

Young Conservatives for the Freedom to Marry support his position. "Newt Gingrich's new position shows that when conservatives truly examine their core values - family, individual freedom and limited government - we see that the freedom to marry is fundamentally in line with those beliefs.

"Our party must keep pace with the American people if it is to remain relevant in the political process, and as we saw in the recent election, we have some changes to make. Mr. Gingrich's call for Republicans to acknowledge widespread support for equal treatment of all loving, committed couples is a good start. We hope other leading Republicans will follow suit."

Chamber on the move

By Bill Krenz

CENTRAL PENNSYLVANIA GAY AND LESBIAN CHAMBER OF COMMERCE

Chamber Hosted Certification Roadshow; Annual Meeting March 2 at Hershey Lodge

Dec. 13-14, the Central Pennsylvania Gay and Lesbian Chamber of Commerce was honored to have as its guest Ms. Sam McClure, the National Gay and Lesbian Chamber of Commerce Director of Affiliate Relations and Externals Affairs, when our local chamber hosted the a certification roadshow. Formally known as Lesbian Gay Bisexual Transgendered Business Enterprise Certification, the certification allows for chamber members to be eligible for business opportunities.

McClure was spoke at the Harrisburg Regional Chamber's Supplier Diversity Forum Dec. 14, an event attended by local LGBT and allied business owners, some of whom are certified, including business owners who are certified, and by local procurement and supplier diversity professionals

"I am inspired by all of the amazing LGBT business leaders and entrepreneurs that I meet when we're out on the road," said McClure. "There's a strong desire within our local affiliate members to access opportunities that will drive strategic growth in their businesses. These cities are lucky to have such strong business communities and LGBT chambers of commerce, and we are proud to have them as our partners."

In addition to its ongoing work educating the LGBT business community about the opportunities created by corporate Supplier Diversity Programs, the national chamber used the roadshow as an opportunity to explore new benefits for affiliate chambers. For example, the national chamber has waived all fees for LGBT Business Enterprise Certification to any member of a local affiliate chambers.

Past Events:

Chamber members and the governing board attended FAB Nov 10.

A Nov. 15 mixer was held at Harrisburg's Best Western Premier, the Central Hotel & Conference Center. Justin Bacon, hotel sales manager, gave tours of the recently renovated rooms and common space and reminded members of the discounts given to members who utilize the hotel for family and friends from outside the area.

A Dec. 6 mixer was held at Harrisburg's Nauman-Smith law firm.

Dec. 8 the chamber coordinated its first holiday community service project in conjunction with the First Reformed Church and Vision of Hope Church by collecting toys for children affected by HIV/AIDS. Dec. 8, six chamber volunteers assisted with wrapping and presentation of gifts, helped to organize craft activities, and assisted with lunch while Santa entertained the children.

Dec. 10, the chamber hosted a workshop presented by Deb Bixler, "Basic Social Media for Business" at the LGBT Community Center in Harrisburg. If you have been told that your business needs to be in Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn or have a social media presence, then this workshop was for you.

Upcoming Events:

Please check the chamber's website - www.cpglcc.org - for the latest events. If your business would be interested in hosting a 2013 mixer, contact Seth Hamill at shamill@cpglcc.org. The calendar is filling up quickly.

The chamber will present a workshop entitled "It's All About Connections" at the Gay Straight Alliance Leadership Summit which is being held at Dickinson College on Feb. 22-23. If you are interested in getting involved with our work to support young leaders in our community, please email education@cpglcc.org for more information.

The chamber is pleased to announce that the annual meeting is scheduled for The Hershey Lodge, Sat., March 2. See the web site for additional details.

See our web site for Chamber Perks and Benefits Update, which includes framing discounts, self-help counseling discounts, and insurance discounts.

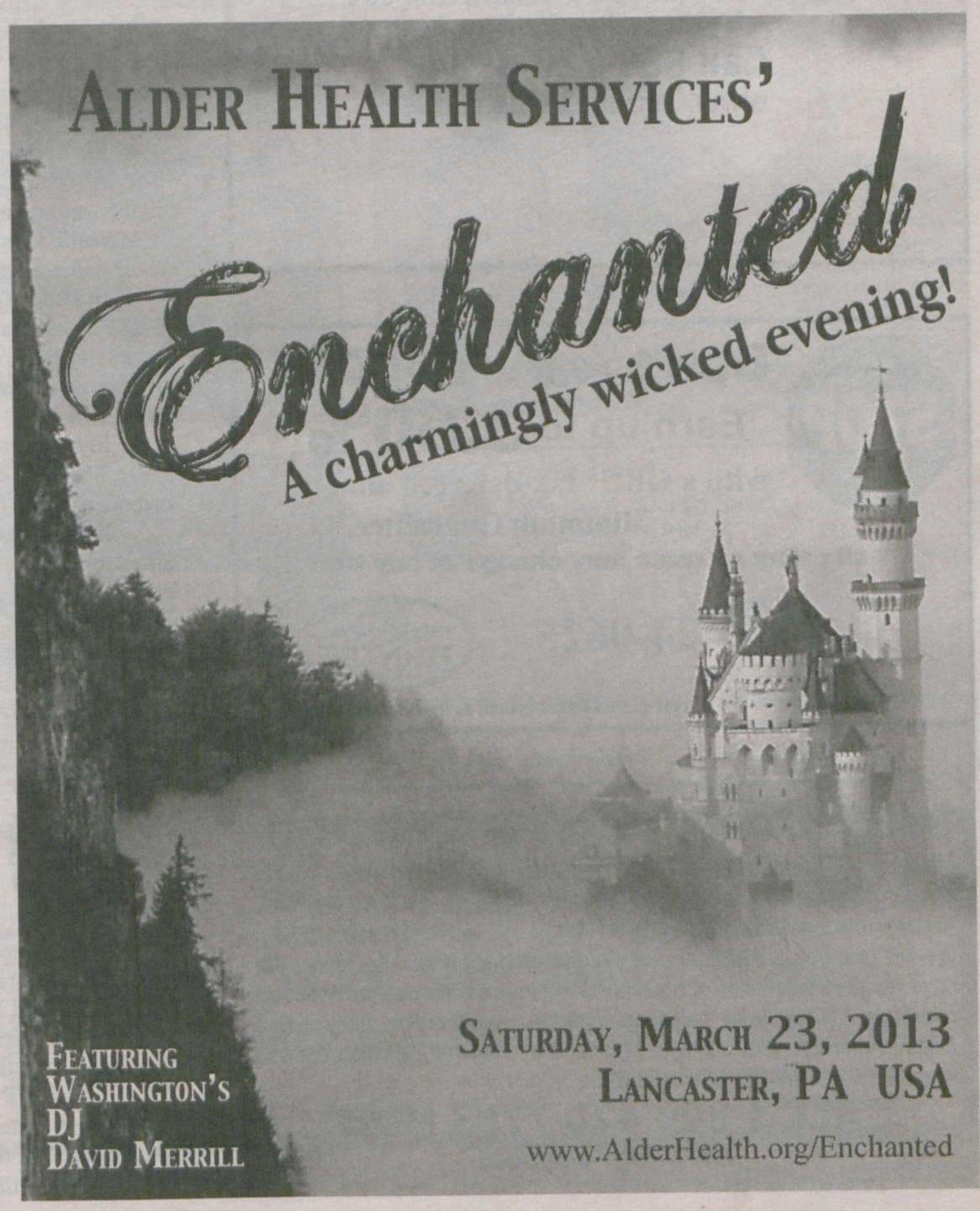
Would Lennon Blink?

Imagine all the people living life in peace. At The Dakota that is, the fabled Upper West Side co-op where John Lennon was shot as he returned home late one evening.

Hedge fund manager Alphonse Fletcher Jr. is suing the co-op board over their refusal to allow him to buy board president Bruce Barnes' palatial $29.6 million digs adjacent to Fletcher's two other apartments. (Why do we stumble over calling a living space that costs nearly $30 million an apartment?)

The board says Fletcher's past, unpaid legal bills form the reason they decided he can't financially handle a third investment in the building. Fletcher, who is black, claims discrimination. Media reports, including the Wall Street Journal, indicate that Fletcher has had problems paying off his legal teams in the past, reporting that court filings by his fund show that when it filed for bankruptcy-court protection, it owed more than $2 million to law firms.

The building got its name when residents of the earlier developed Lower East Side referred to its far North location similar to living in "Dakota". Only time will tell if residents of the co-op, if not the world, will live as one.



Megachurch Pastor Protests Too Much

Megachurch pastor Rick Warren has said that same sex relationships would still be sinful even if they were natural. "It wouldn't bother me if there was a 'gay gene' found," he told CNN host Piers Morgan. "Here's what we know about life," Warren said. "I have all kinds of natural feelings in my life and it doesn't necessarily mean that I should act on every feeling. Sometimes I get angry and feel like punching a guy in the nose. That doesn't mean I act on it. Sometimes I feel attracted to women who are not my wife. I don't act on it. Just because I have a feeling doesn't make it right. Not everything natural is good for me. Arsenic is natural." The evangelical Christian pastor said people were naturally predisposed to enjoy certain things, which could be good or bad. While those attractions themselves were morally neutral, acting on them could be wrong.

Another one?

American Taliban Strikes Again

The world's largest political organization, The Catholic Church, has scored another touchdown for injustice in Green Bay, Wisconsin. Bishop David Ricken in a letter to his diocese proclaimed that if a voter chose someone for choice and marriage equality their soul will be in jeopardy. Translating that vague language, if you vote for President Obama you can go directly to hell. Ricken's letter notes that the church has a responsibility to "speak out regarding moral issues, especially on those issues that impact the 'common good.'" It goes on to note principles to keep in mind in the voting booth on Nov. 6, including abortion, euthanasia, embryonic stem cell research, human cloning and gay marriage. Whatever happened to separation of church and state?

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PA Rep. Metcalfe Re-intros Anti-gay Marriage Bill

PA Representative Daryl Metcalfe is expected to re-introduce an amendment in the General Assembly outlawing same-sex marriage. Similar efforts by Metcalfe introduced in 2008, 2011, and 2012 never gained legislative traction.

In 2006, nearly every Western Pennsylvania House Democrat voted in favor of a similar amendment later watered down by the state Senate in an attempt to make the bill unattractive to Senate Republicans.

In a memo to House colleagues on his latest effort, Metcalfe compares his measure to Florida's marriage protection act.

In the near future, I will be introducing legislation proposing an amendment to the Constitution of Pennsylvania providing for the definition of marriage as the union of one man and one woman. My legislation is similar to a bill that passed the House in June 2006 by an overwhelming majority.

This constitutional amendment will eliminate confusion as to what constitutes a legal marriage, and it will also designate marriage as the only type of union that will be legally recognized in Pennsylvania. The language contained in my legislation is modeled after Florida's marriage protection amendment, which was approved by more than 60 percent of Florida voters in 2008. To date, voters in 30 states have ratified similar amendments to their state constitution.

It is important that we support traditional marriage and have constitutional amendments to protect it at the state level. Marriage is a common good, not a special interest. Special interests should not have the right to redefine marriage for all of us.

In April 2012, Equality Pennsylvania stopped a similar effort dead in its tracks getting the proposed amendment removed from consideration, according to EPA executive director Ted Martin.

"In 2013, we intend a repeat performance if this ugly and mean-spirited proposal rears its head. That's our guarantee," he said.

7 AIDS Activists Arrested

Keeping some skin in the game, a few days before World AIDS Day, last Dec. 1, seven AIDS activists entered House Speaker Boehner's Office. They stripped naked and demanded a meeting with him. The activists from QUEEROCRACY, ACT UP NY and ACT UP Philadelphia painted slogans on their bodies instead of holding signs: AIDS Cuts Kill, Fund PEPFAR, Fund Ryan White, Fund Global Fund, Fund Medicaid, Fund HOPWA.

"When you strip away the rhetoric of the fiscal cliff and the grand bargain, you see that these terms are a way to thinly veil draconian budget cuts that will leave millions around the world with absolutely nothing," said Cassidy Gardner from QUEEROCRACY. The activists said proposed budget cuts will result in 620,000 otherwise preventable deaths worldwide from HIV.

Balto County Pays Rent to Anti-gay Group

By Lou Chibarro

A Beltsville, Md.-based religious organization headed by Bishop Harry Jackson, who led campaigns to oppose same-sex marriage laws in D.C. and Maryland, received more than $3.4 million in rental income over a five-year period from the Prince George's County Public Schools.

Under terms established in two leases, the P.G. County Public Schools rented 35,000 square feet of office space from September 2007 to August 2012 in an office building at 6251 Ammendale Road in Beltsville.

P.G. County land records show that the building is owned by Christian Hope Ministries, Inc., for which Jackson serves as president. The building is also home to Hope Christian Church, where Jackson serves as pastor.

Briant Coleman, a spokesperson for P.G. County Public Schools, said the decision to rent office space at the Ammendale Road building was made by the school system's former superintendent, John Deasy, who currently serves as superintendent of the Los Angeles Public School System.

Coleman said neither he nor the P.G. schools' current superintendent, Alvin Crawley, know why Deasy selected the office building owned by Christian Hope Ministries other than that the building and rental agreement met the school system's criteria for doing business with a vendor.

"Based on the best and final offer, we would make a determination as to whether or not a vendor can provide services we need and whether or not it was the most reasonable price available," Coleman said.

Deasy, who left the P.G. Public Schools in 2008, didn't immediately respond to a call and email sent to his Los Angeles office.

Jackson also didn't return a call or respond to an email seeking comment this week.

Jackson and Deasy each signed the two leases. Also signing them was Gary W. Michael, who at the time was president of NAI Michael Companies, a property management and lease brokerage firm that Jackson retained to find a tenant for the section of the building that the church doesn't use.

Michael, reached Monday at his office in Lanham, Md., said he recalls that the school system responded to a public listing his company issued announcing the availability of the office space for rent.

"I don't have to support someone in every aspect for me to do business with them," Michael said when asked if he knew of Jackson's efforts to defeat marriage equality laws.

According to Michael, Christian Hope Ministries has a mortgage on the building. Land records show the organization paid $8.55 million for the building in February 2005.

"With their expenses and paying the mortgage there may not be a whole lot left over," he said referring to the rental income.

One of the leases was for 30,000 square feet of office space on the second floor of the two-story building. The other was for 5,000 square feet of office space located on the building's first floor.

The base rent was the same in both leases – $18.20 per square foot for the first year, with an annual increase of 3.5 percent. The 30,000-square-foot lease began in 2007 with a monthly rent of $45,500, with $546,000 to be paid the first year. In the fifth year, the school system was to pay $626,400 for the 30,000-square-foot space and $104,425 for the 5,000-square-foot lease if the school system remained in the building for the full fifth year.

In addition to what the leases described as the "base" rent, the leases called for the school system to pay 100 percent of the building's property taxes, 41 percent of the building's maintenance expenses, 48 percent of "all bills" for electricity, gas and water used on the premises along with sewer charges, and 41 percent of the total premium for fire and extended coverage insurance.

The leases also call for Christian Hope Ministries to pay a 6 percent leasing commission to NAI The Michael Companies on "all gross rent paid by tenant" during the full term of the leases and any renewals or extensions of the leases. The Michael Companies, among other things, were to collect the rent from the P.G. County Public Schools and disburse it to Jackson's group after deducting the commission, according to the terms of leases.

An online listing shows that Jackson is currently looking for a new tenant in the building.

Peter Montgomery, an official with People for the American Way, an LGBT supportive group that monitors religious right organizations that oppose LGBT rights, including Jackson's organizations, said he was unaware that the P.G. County Public Schools rented space in Jackson's building.

"I don't think there is anything wrong with a church generating income from a business enterprise," Montgomery said.

"There would be a problem if the county rented that space as a favor to Jackson," he said.

Guidestar.com is an organization that monitors charities and provides access to IRS 990 reports that most charitable organizations with a tax exemption are required to file each year. According to Guidestar, Christian Hope Ministries is registered with the IRS as a church and is exempt from having to file a 990 reporting form.

"Revenue and expense data are not available for this organization," Guidestar states on its website.

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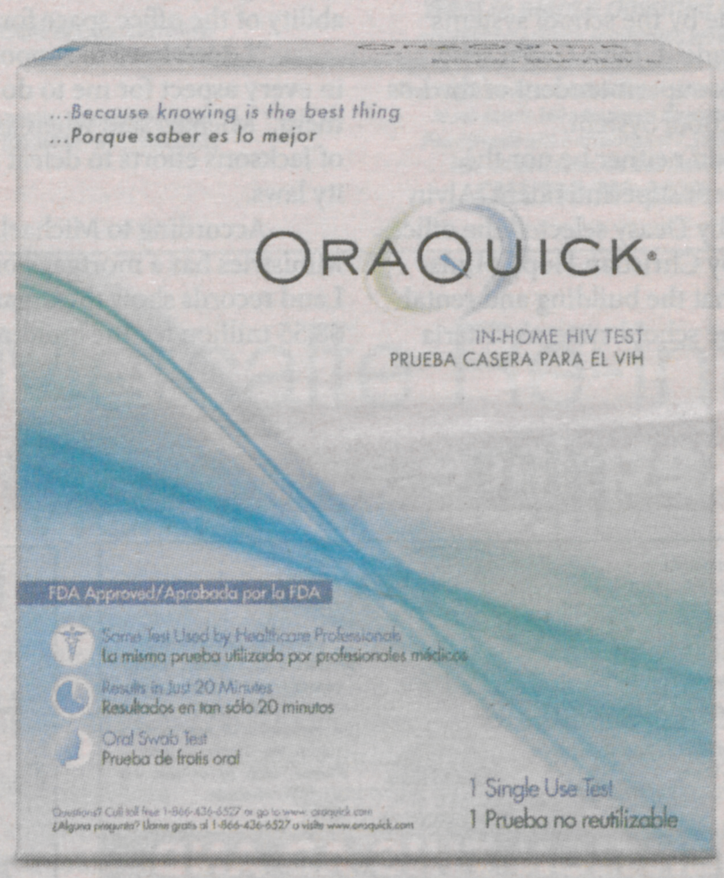
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